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THE
AUTO-BIOGRAPHY
OF
MAHARSHI DEVENDRANATH TAGORE

(WITH PORTRAITS)

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL BENGALI

BY
SATYENDRANATH TAGORE
AND
INDIRA DEVI

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Maharshi as Acharya

ERRATA.

PAGE.	LINE.	ERRORS.	CORRECTIONS.
4	23	vrisha kashtla	vrisha kashtla ^a
31	1	ntroduced	introduced
„	2	rom	from
40	14	Puranas, or and	Puranas, and
46	last	Period mourning	Period of mourning
48	28	mounted up upwards	mounted upwards
53	5 6	will will not	will not
55	17	as	as
57	16	audience	audience
65	16	what	what is
66	20	It hought	I thought
67	21	Of these, four men	Of these four men
78	13	tree	freed
86	2	an	and
„	24	round	around
88	2	in	into
94	10	Su	Such
131	8	here ' He answered,	here, ' he answered.
115	12	Tanjaun	Panjam
134	21	had	has
136	3	both wrists., 'I	both wrists He said, I
142	21	bat	back
148	17	in	with
166	33,34	ot the ot the	ot the
178	1	gating	trace

SANSKRIT MISPRINTS.

Page	Sanskrit extract	Line	Incorrect	Correct
8	..	1	सञ्चक	सञ्चेक
31	.	4	प्रहर्त्त	प्रहर्त्त
76	.	1	कुलीवेद	कुलावेद
83	2	2	निषवेत	निषवेत
83	3	...	जेष्ठः	ज्येष्ठ
87	2	...	मव्य	मव्यय
165	...	1	द	य
166	1	...	या	यो
	2	...	अभिव्याराशीति	अभिव्याहाराशीति

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INTRODUCTION

This translation is offered as a humble tribute to my father's memory, in the hope that it may reach a wider circle of readers than the original could possibly command. To facilitate a fuller comprehension of this simple narrative, I subjoin a short sketch of my father's life and of the Brahmo Samaj with which he was so thoroughly identified, carrying it for the sake of completeness beyond the period covered by the Autobiography.

Devendranath Tagore, latterly known as *Maharshi* or the Saint, was born in Jaishtha, May 1817, in the family mansion at Jorasanko, Calcutta. Having received an early education in the school founded by Raja Rammohan Roy, he, in his 14th year, joined the Hindu College, which was, in those days, an educational institution of some standing and repute. My father, son of the wealthy Dwarkanath Tagore whose lavish expenditure earned him the title of Prince, was, as may be imagined, brought up in the midst of pomp and luxury. In the formation of his early religious impressions he was influenced by the traditions of an orthodox Hindu household, and above all, by the teachings and example of his grandmother, under whose loving care he seems to have spent a happy childhood. So he grew up a wilful young man,—holding the religion of his forefathers in great reverence, though practically more mindful of his worldly than spiritual interests. But certain providential occurrences, which are graphically described in the Autobiography, wrought a change in him on his attaining manhood, and he felt within himself an awakening towards a higher life.

In 1839, he established a Society called the Tatwabodhini Sabha, which held regular weekly meetings at his house, where

discourses on religious subjects were delivered. Besides these, monthly meetings were held for worship, when prayers were offered, and texts from the Upanishads were recited and expounded. The Sabha started a monthly Theological Journal, the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*, which, under the able editorship of Akshay Kumar Dutt, rendered valuable service to liberal theology and Bengali literature, and which after many vicissitudes, still exists as a Bengali monthly. After some years, the *Tatwabodhini Sabha* was incorporated into the *Brahma Samaj*. The Mahatma, in his Autobiography, gives an interesting account of the first anniversary meeting of the Sabha, which was celebrated with great *clat* in 1842. It was in the same year that my father paid his first visit to the *Brahmo Samaj*. The Samaj, it must be stated here, was not then an organized community. It consisted merely of a small knot of persons who met together from time to time, to recite the Vedas, and offer spiritual worship. Raja Rammohan Roy had founded the Samaj in 1828, and consecrated for its use a house of worship some time later, (11th Magh 1830). Since then, his worthy co-adjutor Runchandra Vidyavagish had zealously served as a minister of the Samaj, but the congregation was not growing, and the cause, if anything, seemed yearly to languish. But when my father joined the Samaj, everything was changed. He devoted himself with zeal and energy to its reorganization, introduced a regular form of worship including prayers for spiritual light and strength, and drew up a covenant for promoting consistency of conduct among the brotherhood.

My father himself and 19 others were the first to sign the Brahmic covenant and publicly accept initiation at the hands of Pandit Vidyavagish. "As the twenty young men, dressed in suitable attire, approached the Pandit and repeated with reverential awe the solemn words of the covenant, the feelings of the old minister overpowered him to such an extent that he sobbed like a child, and could not deliver the sermon he had

intended to preach, but only said, ' Oh ' how I wish that Ram-mohan Roy were present on this day '*

In 1844, my father established a 'Tatwabodhini Pathshala, or Theological School for the teaching of Vedanta, and the training of young men to preach the Brahmo religion. And in the following year he sent four students to Benares for higher theological studies. Each of these Brahmans was instructed to study one of the Vedas in the holy city. These men were, after their return, employed as preachers and ministers of the Brahma Samaj. Of these, Pandit Ananda Chandra Vedantavagish was the most conspicuous. He held the chief ministership of the Samaj till his death, and published various editions of Vedanta works and the Bhagavat-gita, and was the editor of the Sruta and Grihya sutras, published in the Bibliotheca Indica of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

The year 1845 was memorable in the history of the Samaj, for the strenuous efforts put forth by the Brahmoe to defend their religion against the attacks of Christian missionaries. Dr Duff had published the year before unimpeached structures on the Brahmoe and then religion in his work 'India and Indian Missions'. He described the Brahmo Samaj as a sect of Vedantists who believed in the infallibility of the Vedas. This statement led the Brahmoe to a formal consideration of their position. It was discovered that, in the Samaj itself, there was wide disagreement as to the degree of authority to be accorded to the sacred books. Akshay Kumar Dutt, the editor of the 'Tatwabodhini Patrika, who was the intellectual leader, as my father was the spiritual head, of the Samaj, refused to acknowledge their infallibility. Finally, after much discussion, my father formally renounced the doctrine of Verbal inspiration. At a general meeting of the Brahmoe, it was agreed that the Vedas, Upanishads, and other ancient writings were not to

be accepted as infallible guides, that Reason and Conscience were to be the Supreme Authority, and the teachings of the Scriptures were to be accepted only in so far as they harmonized with the light within us.

With the increase in the number of worshippers, the want of a text-book for their guidance was keenly felt. In order to supply that want my father compiled and published the "Brahma Dharma Grantha", a valuable theistic manual of religion and morals. The first part of the book is devotional, and contains texts from the Upanishads on the existence and attributes of God, on the knowledge of God and his worship. This part of the book was thrown off in one sitting, and under one spell of inspiration. My father gave vent to the outpourings of his heart in the words of the Upanishads, and Akshay Kumar Dutt took them down in writing there and then, and in three hours the whole book was composed. The second part consists of moral precepts from Manu, Yagnavalkya, Mahabharat and other Hindu Scriptures. In an appendix to the book the following were laid down as the cardinal principles of the Brahmic faith.

1. In the beginning there was naught. The One Supreme alone existed. He created the whole universe.
2. He alone is The God of Truth, Infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Power, Eternal and All-pervading, the One without a second (Ekamevadvityam).
3. In His worship lies our salvation in this world and in the next.
4. Loving Him and doing that which He loveth constitute His worship.

Besides looking after the Calcutta Samaj, my father helped to establish branches in Midnapur, Burdwan, Dacca, Rangpur, Krishnagar, and several other places. All this work extending over a period of nearly 12 years, is set forth in the Autobiography.

In the year 1846 my grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore died during his second visit to England. The death was a great blow to my father from a worldly point of view also, launching him into pecuniary troubles and embarrassments of no ordinary kind. Not only this, but it seemed as if this event was a heaven-sent ordeal meant to test his spiritual strength in the face of opposition and persecution which arose from an unexpected quarter. It all happened in this way. When the time came for the performance of the funeral obsequies (Sradha), my father, as the eldest son, had to take a leading part in the ceremony. But all our domestic ceremonies are interwoven with idolatry. What was to be done? The Brahmic Covenant imposed upon him the duty of discountenancing all idolatrous rites. Great pressure, however, was brought to bear on him in connection with his father's obsequies. Raja Radhakanta Dev's advice was that he should "perform the Sradha strictly according to the directions given in the Shastras." But the Maharshi was firm. "I have embraced Brahmoism as my religion," he said, "I cannot do any thing which is in conflict with the vow I have taken. But you may rest assured that I shall do nothing which is not sanctioned by our highest authorities." "No, no", said the Raja, "that won't do. That would be against custom. Do as I say and all will go well." My father took counsel with his brother Girindranath. But my uncle Girindra was for a compromise. "If we go against custom," he pointed out, "our own kith and kin will desert us." My father was thus left all alone, but he stood firm and triumphed. He refused to take part in the idolatrous rites, and performed the Sradha according to a form which he had himself prepared for the occasion. This measure of reform raised a storm of opposition from his orthodox relatives and friends, and created a permanent breach in the family. This was a serious loss, but the gain was a great deal more in comparison. My father writes, "My friends and relatives

forsook me, but my God took me in with his blessings. My conscience was satisfied at the triumph of the Right. What more could I want ?

My grandfather Dwaikanath Tagore died deeply involved in debt. At the time of his death it was found that his liabilities amounted to about a crore of rupees, while his assets were only 43 lakhs. To maintain his princely state, Dwaikanath Tagore had apparently contracted heavy debts in the name of his firm, taking care at the same time to secure a portion of his property in the shape of trust, for the benefit of his family. The manager of the firm Mr D M Gordon, convened a meeting of the creditors, and informed them that the proprietors of the firm were prepared to make over to them all their property, excepting only the trust property which no one could touch. The creditors themselves, when the proposal was made, seemed inclined to accept it but it did not commend itself to my father's sense of justice. He held a brief consultation with his brother and astonished every one by declaring that they would not avail themselves of the protection afforded by the trust but would place everything unreservedly in the hands of their creditors, till all their heavy liabilities were liquidated. The creditors were deeply moved, and one of them it is recorded shed tears at the meeting. An arrangement was come to by which the creditors took charge of the property and allowed the bereaved sons a subsistence allowance of Rs 25,000 per annum. My father felt supremely happy in the consciousness of having dealt justly by his creditors, and as he went home he remarked to his brother Girindia that they had performed a "Vis'va, it Yajna" by giving away everything they possessed. My father writes, "What I had desired came to pass. I wanted to renounce the world, and the world left me of its own accord. What a singular coincidence ! I had prayed to my God, 'I desire nothing but Thee', and the Lord in his mercy granted my prayer. He



Keshab Chandra Sen

(Fig VII)

took away everything from me, and revealed Himself unto me. My heart's desire was fulfilled to the letter."

The creditors, however, did not long continue to hold the property. They were so convinced of my father's honest intentions, that in two years they relinquished the estate to his management, and accordingly he resumed its charge. It took years and years for him to pay off the compounded debts, but by means of judicious management, and exemplary self-denial, he eventually succeeded in doing so to the last farthing. It was not only in the matter of his father's debts that he was scrupulous. Dwarkanath Tigora had been profuse in his charities and some liberal promises of pecuniary assistance remained unfulfilled before his death. My father took upon himself the discharge of all such obligations, and in one instance, in the case of a promise of a lakh of rupees made to the District Charitable Society of Calcutta, it is said that he paid not only the full donation but interest thereon from the date on which it had been promised.

Ever since embracing the Brahmic faith, my father had travelled a good deal. He made it a rule to set out on tour every year when the Durga Puja festival came round with a view to keep himself aloof from the idolatrous ceremonies which were still adhered to and practised in his domestic circle, and which he had no power to abolish. In this way he travelled over various parts of India. Leaving out of account the innumerable places he visited in Bengal, the names of Lahore, Multan, Amritsar and Rangoon may be mentioned among the various places to which he went, preaching and proclaiming the Brahmo religion, and establishing Samajes, where practicable. In 1856 he for the first time set foot on the Himalayas, and there he heard the Call which was to definitely determine his future course. He spent a year and a half among the mountains in the vicinity of the Simla Hills, absorbed in intense study and contemplation, and returned to Calcutta

shortly after the Sepoy Mutiny, a regenerated Soul, full of ardour and enthusiasm to propagate the holy religion he had embraced. It was then that he poured forth his inspired utterances in a series of sermons, delivered extempore from the pulpit, which made a most profound impression upon the congregation. The sermons were taken down in writing by myself and others, and eventually published in a book entitled *The Brâhma Dharma Vyakhyan*, or "Exposition of the Brâhma Dharma"*

The autobiography breaks off at the time when my father resumed his work in the Brahma Samaj, on his return from the Himalayas. Indeed, the last chapter takes us little beyond the threshold of his career as a religious reformer. The early fifties were not an eventful period either in my father's life, or in the history of the Brahma Samaj. They were devoted to the work of quiet construction and consolidation. The second period may be said to commence with the year 1859, shortly after my father's return from Simla, when an event occurred which was destined to work a great revolution in the Samaj. This was the coming of Keshab Chandra Sen into the ranks of the Brahmo brotherhood. The immediate cause of Keshab's acquaintance with my father was his anxiety to take the Maharshi's advice as to the propriety of taking the mantra from his family Guru in accordance with the time-honoured custom of his forefathers. I remember very well taking him to my father, and the question proposed was,—would he be justified in conforming to that custom? This question, after some discussion, was decided in the negative. This and subsequent acts of nonconformity on the part of Keshab, led to a serious rupture between him and the elders of his family. Matters came to such a pass that Keshab and his wife were compelled to leave their home and take shelter in our family-house for some time (1862).

* See Appendix D.

My father was much struck by the earnestness and ability of young Keshab, and at once accepted him as a friend and co-adjutor. A deep and abiding attachment sprang up between them. "The mature man of fifty joined himself to the eager youth of twenty-three, and they both agreed to work with a cheerfulness and enthusiasm which none had experienced before." Thenceforth they jointly began to plan and adopt several important measures for the improvement of the Samaj, the most noteworthy being the establishing of the *Brahma Vidyalaya*, a theological Institute where both of them gave lectures on religious subjects in Bengali and English. In 1862, my father installed Keshab as Acharya of the Samaj, and conferred on him the title of *Brahmānanda*. From that time my father was known as the *Pradhān Achārya* (Chief Minister) of the Samaj.

But this harmony was not to last. The temperaments of the two men differed too widely to allow of a permanent co-operation. My father, though an uncompromising enemy of idolatrous worship, was essentially conservative in his instincts. While endeavouring to revive the lofty Theism of the Upanishads, he was not prepared for measures calculated, as it seemed, to subvert the social fabric of modern Hinduism. He cherished an ideal differing greatly from that of the bulk of the educated young men of his day. To him ancient India, was the cradle of all that was pure in morals and religion. He was a man more deeply imbued than any one in modern times, with the genuine spirit of the ancient Rishis. It is singular that the one field of religious inspiration which was foreign to him was the Hebrew Scriptures. He was never known to quote the Bible, nor do we find any allusion to Christ or his teachings in his sermons. For him the Indian Scriptures sufficed. His religion was Indian in origin and expression; it was Indian in ideas and in spirit. The late Rev. Pratap Chandra Mozumdar wrote in a recent article, "To

the most straitlaced Evangelist the Protestant Bible had no greater authority and inspiration than the Upanishads had for Mahaishi Devendranath. It nourished and deepened every faculty in him." The Brahman of the Upanishads was the God of his worship, and it was from Brahman that the Samaj derived its name. The direct communion of the human soul with the Supreme Spirit was the most salient point of his teachings. No Gurus or Prophets stand between our soul and our God. We see him face to face, and hear His voice in the innermost depths of our conscience. The Divinity of Jesus Christ, Christ the only Mediator and Saviour of mankind, such doctrines were repugnant to his austere Monotheism. As regards social reformation, he was for adopting a slow and cautious policy, a policy of conciliation. he was in favour of leaving such reforms as were really required to the influence of time, and to the effect of the teachings of a pure religion. Keshab, on the other hand, was a reformer of a more pronounced type. Though for many years he had sat at the feet of the Mahaishi, a time came when he could no longer pull on with his conservatism. Intermarriage, remarriage of widows, abolition of caste distinctions, all these questions of radical reform were started and discussed. On these questions, it would seem, my father yielded as far as his conservatism would permit, but when he thought that Keshab's disciples were going too far, he drew back in alarm. Then again, there were other differences between the two. My father as I have said, was intensely national in his religious ideal, whereas Keshab's outlook was more cosmopolitan. While national in some respects, he was better fitted by his training and education to assimilate the ideas and civilization of the West. Indeed, his whole character was moulded by Western culture and Christian influences. He drew much of his spiritual store from the New Testament, and habitually spoke of Jesus Christ in a manner which made his missionary friends cling to a hope for his conversion to their faith. In "Jesus Christ,

Europe and Asia," a lecture delivered in April 1865, Keshab says —

"I cherish the profoundest reverence for the character of Jesus, and the lofty ideal of moral truth which he taught and lived" In Christ we see not only the exaltedness of humanity, but also the grandeur of which Asiatic nature is susceptible. To us Asiatics therefore, Christ is doubly interesting, and his religion is entitled to our peculiar regard And thus in Christ, Europe and Asia the East and the West, may learn to find harmony and unity'

These utterances, though of a date subsequent to the separation, are sufficient to show his attitude towards Christianity, in marked contrast to my father's. A struggle between two such temperaments and such opposite ideals, was bound to end in disruption, and matters soon came to a crisis.

The immediate cause of the rupture is generally believed to have been the objection raised by Keshab to the wearing of the sacred thread by those who conducted Divine Service in the Brahma Samaj At first my father was inclined to give in, and even went so far as actually to set up two of Keshab's friends, who had discarded their Brahminical thread, as Acharyas, in the place of the old Ministers who had refused to comply with the proposed reform But on second thoughts, reflecting perhaps on what was due to the old ministers who had suffered so much for the Samaj, and being desirous of retaining and harmonizing the conservative and progressive elements in the Samaj, he changed his mind, and the old thread-bearing Brahmos were replaced as Ministers *

The rupture between the two parties was further widened by an intermarriage between two persons of different castes, solemnized by Keshab in 1863 this was a reform of a radical

* See Appendix A.

character which my father was not prepared to adopt, in opposition to the sentiments of the entire Hindu community. For some time proposals for separate services in the same Church were discussed, but with no result. A complete severance seemed to be the only solution. Some of the young men broke away, but Keshab held on for some time longer. The mutual love between the Pradhan Acharya and Brahmanand delayed the catastrophe. But as no compromise was possible between the two, separation was inevitable.

In February 1865, Keshab finally withdrew from the parent church. In the following year he sent a parting address to my father, and established the "Brahma Samaj of India." On the secession of Keshab's party, my father gave his own church the name of "Adi Brahma Samaj."

With this important phase in the history of the Samaj the Autobiography does not deal. It would no doubt have been of great interest had it extended to the close of the period, culminating in the schism just described, fully disclosing the causes that led to it, and laying bare the inner workings of my father's mind at the time of the occurrence. But though my father left it incomplete, the letters that passed between the two leaders at the time, and those that were exchanged at the subsequent attempts to heal up the differences between the two churches, throw a flood of light on the controversy. And these, I think, fully bear out my view of the situation as expressed above. My father's work has throughout been constructive and not destructive. He was a builder-up, not a puller-down. He was, I repeat, not in favour of any revolutionary measures of reform which might have the effect of permanently alienating the general body of his countrymen from the Brahma Samaj, and thus operate as a bar to the diffusion and acceptance of pure Monotheism in the country.* The substitution of Theistic

worship for the prevailing idolatry, was to his mind a consummation more devoutly to be wished than mere change of social institution or usage. How strongly he felt this may be gathered from his writings. In a paper called "My Twenty five Years' experience of the Brahma Samaj," he says —

"The practice of taking the Brahmic Covenant was instituted on the 7th ' Paush, Shaka 1765 (1843). On that day I took the covenant before Ramchandra Vidyavagish, the Acharya of the Samaj. From that time I used to travel out every year, when the Durga Puja was celebrated at my house. During my travels, how often have I prayed to my God with tears in my eyes for the day when idolatrous ceremonies would be abolished from our house, and the adoration of the Infinite commence in their stead."

Some time after Keshab with his disciples had severed his connection with the parent Samaj, he determined to convene a meeting for the purpose of considering the best means for cementing his party into a compact religious association. This meeting was held in November 1866, at the Metropolitan College house in Chitpur Road. The meeting was numerously attended. It was opened by divine service, which included some hymns, and the recital of Scriptural texts, extracted from the writings of Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsees and Chinese. This extraordinary innovation was introduced to show the universal and Catholic character of the proposed Church, as will appear from the resolutions that were unanimously carried at the meeting.

These are —

1. That an Association be established under the title of "Brahmo Samaj of India"
2. That this Association be bound to preserve the purity and universality of its religion.

3. That people of both sexes, believing in the fundamental principles of Brahmoism, shall be admissible as members
4. That mottoes and maxims agreeing with the principles of Brahmoism, be gleaned and published from the religious writings of all nations
5. That a vote of thanks be given to Devendra Nath Tagore for his zeal and labour in promoting the progress of the religion

On the 23rd January (11th Magh) 1868 the day on which the 38th annual festival of the Adi Brahmo Samaj was celebrated the foundation-stone of the Brahma Samaj of India was laid, and the erection of the Brahma Mandir in Machua Bazar Street was completed in August 1869, since then the Samaj, founded by Keshab, has met there. Thus, after a series of struggles which it is needless to detail, Keshab's efforts towards consolidating and bringing together the seceding party in one body were crowned with success. But while working for his own Church with indefatigable zeal and unflinching devotion, Keshab, it is a pleasure to note, was nowise unmindful of the debt of gratitude he owed to the Adi Samaj, and was always anxious to establish a *modus vivendi* between the two Churches. He even drew up a scheme with that object, and submitted it to my father for his approval, but somehow, all his efforts in that direction fell through. Nevertheless, he continued to cherish the utmost reverence and regard for my father, and the latter treated him with paternal affection to the last. The schism in the Brahmo Samaj made no difference in their mutual friendly and cordial relations *

The foundation of the new Church of India gave an impetus to much missionary enterprise, and Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, one of the most devoted and prominent of Keshab's followers, was selected for mission work in Southern India, where, through

* See Appendix C.

his exertions, a Brahmo Samaj was established in the city of Madras. Later on, Pratap Chandra carried the banner of Theism across the Atlantic, and made his influence felt chiefly amongst our Unitarian brethren in the West, and succeeded in enlisting their sympathies and co-operation in our cause. Keshab himself went about preaching the religion in Bombay and Northern India. Aghornath Gupta, another missionary, traversed with much difficulty the inaccessible forests of Assam, and preached with success among its rude and superstitious people.

Having established his Church on a firm footing, Keshab, like the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, turned his thoughts towards the West, and in the beginning of 1870 set sail for England, where he was enthusiastically received. His stay in England was "a constant triumph." Her late Majesty Queen Victoria, knowing how great a power for good he wielded in India, graciously granted him a private audience, which left an indelible impression on his heart. His winning manners, persuasive eloquence, and brilliant intellectual attainments created a highly favourable impression on the British public, and he was afforded every opportunity of profiting by close personal intercourse with some of the most celebrated scholars and divines of England. He was, moreover, fortunate in the friendship and intimacy of that eminent Sanskrit scholar Professor Max Muller, who gives us an appreciative sketch of the life and work of Keshab in his Biographical Essays.

'On Keshab's return to India' says Miss Collet in her history of the Brahmo Samaj, "he immediately began to put in practice some of the hints he had gathered in England, and started what he called 'The Indian Reform Association,' a body of which the nucleus was taken from his own Church, but which was declared to be open to all classes, races and creeds, who would join to promote the social and moral reformation of the people of India." The Association was divided into five

branches, viz Female Improvement, Education, Cheap Literature, Temperance and Charity. The first section commenced by opening a Female Normal and Adult school for ladies who wished to be instructed themselves, or to be trained for teaching others. The Normal School has long been closed, but Keshab's Victoria Institution for ladies, with a guls' school attached to it, after various vicissitudes, exists to the present day. It was at this time that Keshab and his followers established their Boarding House, called the Bharat Asram. Industrial schools, night schools, and other charitable experiments followed, but in the attempt to do so much at once, failure and disappointment were inevitable. The most important step in Keshab's career was the part taken by him in ascertaining from expert medical opinion the proper and minimum age for the marriage of guls, and legalizing Brahmo marriages by getting Act III of 1872 passed.

Keshab Chandra would now seem to have attained the summit of his ambition. His fondest expectations were realized. He had surrounded himself with a band of devoted followers, some of whom worshipped him as an Avatar with a blind unreasoning faith. Everything seemed to smile across his path, and a wide field of usefulness and reform lay open before him, when, all of a sudden, a black cloud showed itself on the horizon. This was the marriage of his daughter with the Maharaja of Kuchbehari. I do not propose to enter here upon the merits of the bitter controversy that ensued—suffice it to say that a considerable body of his followers strongly disapproved of the step he had thought fit to take, and that this marriage was the occasion of a further schism in the Samaj. On Thursday, the 22nd March 1878, a large meeting of the members of the Brahmo Samaj of India was called at the Brahma Mandir, in which it was agreed that Babu Keshab Chandra Sen, the Minister of the Mandir, by countenancing the premature marriage of his daughter, and by allowing idolatrous rites to be

observed in connection with that marriage, had violated the principles accepted by himself and the Brahma Samaj of India. It was therefore resolved that "he was not fit to continue in the office of the Minister." The outcome of the opposition was the formation of a third branch, known as the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. This section of the Samaj counts, among its members, such distinguished men as Ananda Mohan Bose, K. G. Gupta, Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri, Dr. P. K. Roy, Sasipada Bannerji and others.

The name "Sadharan" Samaj is significant, as showing that it claims to have advanced from a Church Government of a theocratic type to a Church Government on representative and democratic principles.

The last stage of Keshab's theological development is that represented by the formulation of the New Dispensation. In 1851 Keshab proclaimed this Dispensation, which, besides a number of rites and ceremonies adopted from our own and other systems of religion, emphasises the fundamental unity of all religions. Its creed, as propounded by its founder, is shortly —

The Harmony of all Scriptures and all Saints and all sects

The Harmony of Reason and Faith, of devotion and duty, of Yoga and Bhakti

The Church of the One Supreme No idolatry

The Church of Universal Brotherhood No caste or sectarianism

The following is an Extract from the Creed of the New Dispensation as set forth in the "Navasamhita" —

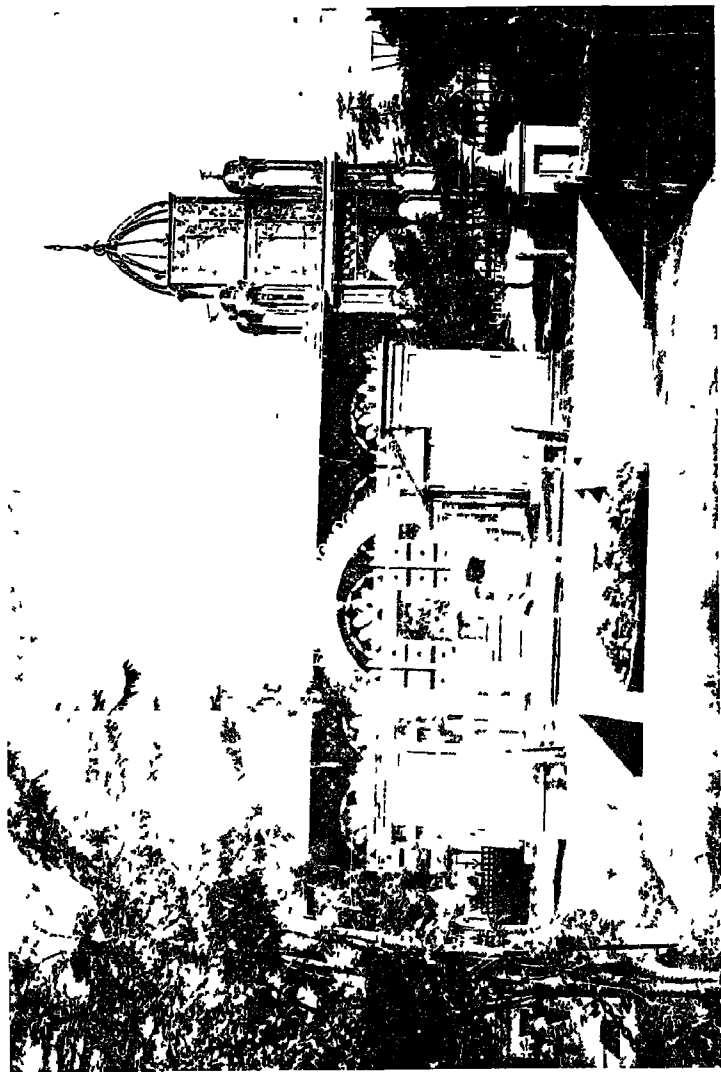
"I accept and revere the Scriptures so far as they are records of the wisdom and devotion and piety of inspired geniuses, and the dealings of God's providence in the salvation of nations, of which records the spirit is of God's, but the letter man's,

"I accept and revere the world's prophets and saints, as far as they embody and reflect the different elements of divine character, and set forth the higher ideals of life for the instruction and sanctification of the world

"My creed is the Science of God which enlighteneth all. My Gospel is the love of God which saveth all. My heaven is life in God which is accessible to all. My church is that invisible Kingdom of God, in which is all truth, all love, all holiness."

The schism in the Brahma Samaj is deplored by some as tending to weaken the cause of Theism in India, but it may be construed as a happy event in another light. Professor Max Muller takes a brighter and more hopeful view of the separation, as will appear from the following passage —

"If we call the separation of the Brahma Samaj of India from the old Adi Brahma Samaj, and again the separation of the Sadharan Samaj from the Brahma Samaj of India, a schism, we seem to condemn by the very word we use. But to my mind these three societies seem like three branches of the one vigorous tree, the tree that was planted by Ram Mohon Roy. In different ways they all serve the same purpose: they are all doing, I believe, unmixed good, in helping to realise the dream of a new religion for India, it may be for the whole world—a religion free from many corruptions of the past, call them idolatry, or caste, or verbal inspiration, or priestcraft,—and firmly founded on a belief in the One God, the same in the Vedas, the same in the Old, the same in the New Testament, the same in the Koran, the same also in the hearts of those who have no longer Vedas or Upanishads or any sacred Books whatever between themselves and their God. The stream is small as yet, but it is a living stream. It may vanish for a time, it may change its name and follow new paths of which as yet we have no idea. But if there is ever to be a new religion in India, it



The Mandir—Santimuketan

will, I believe, owe its very life-blood to the large heart of Rammohan Roy and his worthy disciples, Debendra Nath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen.*

After Keshab's separation, my father practically retired from active work in the Samaj. He had trained up ministers to conduct the service of his own Adī Samaj, and appointed a Committee for the management of its affairs. He continued however, to keep a close supervision over the affairs of the Samaj, and everything was done with his knowledge and under his advice and guidance to the last. For himself he had now another call. That call was to withdraw himself from the din and bustle of the world, and spend his days in communion with his God. "It was to live before the world," as one has well said,—“in it and yet out of it, the life of a true Rishi, and pour forth over all who came into his presence the genial radiance of a man of God. Henceforth he became the common patriarch of all the Samajes, and a Maharshi for all Hindus.

At Bolpur, in the Birbhum District, my father had built many years before a sort of retreat, which he called the Santi-niketan or the "Abode of Peace." Here he had a house, a garden, a mandir and a library, and all conveniences for retirement and study. Here in his younger days he often used to spend his time in meditation and prayer with his favourite disciples, and entertain pilgrims that visited the Hermitage. The Santi-niketan, with all its grounds and appurtenances, have been dedicated to the public for the purposes of Theistic worship by a Trust deed, and a Mela is held there on the 7th Pauṣh every year.

From the time of his retirement to his death several years elapsed. A portion of this period was spent in travel† in, the Himalayas, in Chinsura by the bank of the Ganges, and lastly in Calcutta. For some time my father lived

* Biographical Essays (1884) p. 83.

† Bombay, Kashmīr and Hongkong were among the places visited.

in a separate house in Park street, but he finally settled down in his ancestral home at Jorasanko.

In the latter part of 1902 the Maharshi's health gave way, and since then he was constantly ailing. During the last few months his life was often despaired of, but his wonderful constitution repeatedly conquered death. During his last days, a favourite stanza of Hafiz was always on his lips.

"The bell is tolling. I have heard the call, and am ready to depart with all my luggage"

At last he heard the call, and on Thursday the 19th January 1905, at 1-55 P M quietly passed away at his family residence in Calcutta, conscious almost till the last moment, and surrounded by his sorrowing children and grandchildren.

My late lamented friend, Ananda Mohan Bose, in a letter written on receipt of the news of his death, says of him —

"Son of Dwarkanath Tagore, and the first Secretary, I believe, of the British Indian Association, he might have been a Maharaja long before this. But he chose the better part. Maharajas die but Maharsis live,—live in the grateful hearts of unborn generations"

In conclusion, I wish to advert to one or two other matters bearing on the history and progress of the Brahmo Samaj, which have not found a place in the foregoing sketch.

The most important reform that was introduced after my father returned from the Hills, was the Anushtthan Paddhati, or the Brahmic Ritual, intended to regulate the observance of the domestic rites and ceremonies obtaining among our people at the present day.

For many years the Brahmo Dharma, in spite of the enthusiasm of its first adherents, had continued to be little more than a cold intellectual creed. Its effect on practical life was almost nil. The Brahmic Covenant, binding every Brahmo to



Bee Press

Family members after the Sraddha.

(Page NX)

renounce idol-worship, was, in the majority of cases, honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Many a Brahmo had thus to live a life of unfaithfulness, being forced to conform to social observances which his conscience did not approve of. One exception to this was the performance by the Maharshi of his father's Shraddha on monotheistic principles as related above. The second was the performance of the wedding ceremony of his daughter Sukumari, my second sister, without any idolatrous rites in 1861, after his return from Simla. This innovation may justly be said to have ushered a new era into the history of the Brahma Samaj. Our relatives were greatly embittered at this fresh instance of nonconformity—the legality of the modified ceremonial was moreover not altogether free from doubt. But in the face of these discouragements the reformed marriage was celebrated amidst great enthusiasm and rejoicing on the part of the Brahmo community.

These reformed practices, however, were confined to one or two Brahmo families, and it was necessary to do something to bring them into use among the general Brahmo community. Accordingly my father set to work to prepare a complete Ritual embodying all the Hindu domestic ceremonies in the original Vedic, non-idolatrous form. Every important phase of Hindu social life has its own sacraments. Of the twelve Sanskars or sacramental rites enjoined by Grihya Sutras, Manu and other authorities, beginning with Garbhadhan or the ceremony of conception, and ending in Vivaha or marriage, the most important are Upanayan or investiture with the sacred cord, and marriage. This investiture is looked upon, like the Christian rite of Baptism, as a spiritual second birth or regeneration. Marriage is the twelfth and the last Sanskar. When the Brahmachari or the student has finished his studies, he passes on to the second life-stage (Ashrama), marries and becomes a house-holder (Grihastha). Marriage is a religious duty incumbent upon all. Besides these Sanskarās, there is the Antyeshti or funeral ceremony, and

Sraddha, consisting of homage paid to, and prayers for, the dead.

In the Book of Brahmic Ritual, it will be observed that such of the non-vedic portions of the orthodox ritual as can be kept consistently with Theistic principles, have been retained, with such modifications as are warranted by the exigencies of modern life

In the Upanayan or the thread ceremony, for instance, the investiture with the thread, the begging of alms, the Bramachari or student receiving instructions from the Guru, these and such other rites as are the essential part of the ceremony, have all been retained. After the investiture, the student is initiated into the holy Gayatri,* a Vedic Mantra handed down to us from hoary antiquity, and the duties of student-life are duly impressed upon him.

As regards marriage, the only important departure from the existing practice which distinguishes the new Ritual from the old, is the omission of the Saligram and the Homa ceremony, which constitute a marked feature in ordinary Hindu marriages. The ceremony of Kanyadan or giving away the bride, the rite of Saptapadi or walking of seven steps together by the married couple, have all been left intact in the reformed Ritual, nor does it contravene any of the provisions of the Hindu law as to the rules of consanguinity, the prohibition of Sagotra and inter-caste marriages.

The Brahmos of the Adi Samaj had for some time been endeavouring to procure a formal act of legislation to legalize Brahmo marriages, but on further consideration they abandoned the attempt as useless, being advised that marriages solemnized

* This is the Gayatri Mantra

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो न प्रचोदयात् ।

That adorable glory of Savitri (Vivifier, the Heavenly God, we contemplate. Our pious thoughts may He enlighten.



Rabindra Nath Tagore under the Chhatim tree
(Maharshi's favorite seat, Santiniketan)

in accordance with the form of the Adi Brahmo Samaj were quite as valid as marriages performed under a legislative enactment

When, therefore, at the instance of Keshab Chandra Sen, Government wanted to pass a marriage law applicable to the whole of the Brahmo community, requiring parties desirous to marry to appear before a registrar of Brahmo marriages and get their marriage registered by him, the members of the Adi Samaj, deeming themselves as much Hindu as the rest of the community, applied to Government for exemption from the proposed Act. Owing to their strenuous opposition, the marriage Act of 1872 was passed, in its present form, for the benefit of those who did not profess any recognized form of religion. The passing of the Marriage Act of 1872 was hailed as a signal triumph by Keshab and his party, but the members of the Adi Samaj did not share in this feeling, inasmuch as they were unaffected by its provisions. At the present day, all sections of the Brahmo Samaj, with the exception of the Adi Samaj, avail themselves of the Act by getting their marriages registered, after making the negative declaration as to religion required by the Act, while the Adi Samaj follows a ritual of its own, without registration.

Whether the omission of the idol-worship and Homa Ceremony forming part of the ordinary Hindu marriages would have the effect of invalidating marriages celebrated according to the Adi Brahmo Samaj ritual, is a question on which there is a difference of opinion among lawyers—but the general trend of legal opinion seems to be in favour of the validity of such marriages, especially when they are sanctioned by usage of long standing. My father was strongly opposed to registration as required by the Act, and never doubted the validity of marriages solemnized in the presence of God.

A few years before my father's death, he had completed his autobiography, and, when finished, he entrusted it to his favorite

pupil Priyānath Shastri for publication, conferring upon him the full benefits of its copyright. Although he had originally objected to its publication during his life-time, he was induced upon reconsideration to withdraw the objection, and the book was published shortly before his death, with certain supplementary letters in the form of an Appendix.

The autobiography contains no stirring adventures, or sensational incidents of any kind. Its value consists in its being a record of the spiritual struggle of a noble soul against early associations, conventionality, and family ties—the struggle of a soul striving to rise from empty idolatrous ceremonial to the true worship of the One living God the Brahman of the Upanishads, the Power which operates in the universe, creating, sustaining and destroying, the Eternal Spirit immanent in the world without and in the soul of man. The record, in fine, is one of an illumined life struggling towards more light, and shedding its brilliance on all around. However much the convincing diction of the original may have suffered in translation, I venture to hope that this authentic and first-hand testimony of the direct vision of God may prove helpful and instructive to the devotee and the philosopher alike.

I have been helped in the work of translation by my daughter Indira Devi, who has tried her best to make it as faithful and literal as she possibly could regard being had to the considerable divergence of Western and Eastern modes of thought.

BALIGANJ, CALCUTTA.	}	SATYENDRANATH TAGORE.
20th October, 1908.		



Satyendranath Tagore

CHAPTER I.



My grandmother was very fond of me. To me, also, she was all in all during the days of my childhood. My sleeping, sitting, eating, all were at her side. Whenever she went to *Kalighat*¹ I used to accompany her. I cried bitterly when she went to *Jagannath Kshetra*² and *Brindaban*³ leaving me behind. She was a deeply religious woman. Every day she used to bathe in the Ganges very early in the morning, and every day she used to weave garlands of flowers with her own hands for the *Shalgram*⁴. Sometimes she used to take a vow of solar adoration, giving offerings to the sun from sunrise to sunset. On these occasions I also used to be with her on the terrace in the sun. And constantly hearing the *mantras*⁵ of the sun-worship repeated, they became quite familiar to me.

“नवाकुसुमसंकाश काश्यपेय महाम्युति ।

ध्वान्तिरि सर्वपापघ्नं प्रणतीऽस्मि दिवाकर” ॥⁶

At other times *Didima*⁷ used to hold a *Haribasar*⁷ festival, and

¹ The temple of Kali in Calcutta.

² Two places of pilgrimage.

³ The family idol.

⁴ Texts from the Shastras.

⁵ I adore the sun, red as *Java* flower, brilliant son of *Kashyapa*, enemy of darkness, destroyer of all evils.

⁶ Grandmother

⁷ A Vaishnavite festival.

the whole night there was *Katha* and *Kirtan*,¹ the noise of which would not let us sleep

She used to look after the whole household, and do much of the work with her own hands. Owing to her skill in housekeeping, all domestic concerns worked smoothly under her guidance. After everybody had taken their meals, she would eat food cooked by herself. I too had a share in her *havishyanna* ². And this *prasad*³ of hers was more to my taste than the food prepared for myself. She was as lovely in appearance as she was skilled in her work, and steadfast in her religious faith. But she had no liking for the frequent visits of the *Ma-Gosain* ⁴. There was a certain freedom of mind in her, together with her blind faith in religion. I used to accompany her to our old family-house to see *Gopinath Thakur* ⁵. But I did not like to leave her and go to the outer apartments. I would sit in her lap and watch everything, quietly, from the window. Now my *Didima* is no more. But after how long, and after how much seeking, have I now found the *Didima* that is hers also, and, seated on Her lap, am watching the pageant of this world.

Some days before her death *Didima* said to me, "I will give all I have to you, and nobody else." Shortly after this she gave me the key of her box. I opened it and found some rupees and gold *mohurs*, whereupon I went about telling everyone I had got *mudi-mudki* ⁶. In the year 1757 *Shak* (1242 B. S.) when *Didima* was on her death-bed, my father had gone on a journey to Allahabad. The *vaidya*⁷ came and said that the patient should not be kept in the house any longer. So they brought my grandmother out into the open, in order to take her to the banks of the Ganges. But *Didima* still wanted to live, she did not wish to go to the Ganges. She

¹ Recitation and singing of hymns

² Rice and ghee—an abstemious diet prescribed on special occasions.

³ Consecrated food

⁴ Priestess of the Vaishnavites

⁵ The family idoli

⁶ Rice parched and sweetened—hence white and gold coloured.

⁷ Physician, doctor.



মহর্ষি । A. c. 18.

Page 5

said, "If Dwarkanath had been at home, you would never have been able to carry me away" But they did not listen to her, and proceeded with her to the river side. She said, "as you are taking me to the Ganges against my wish, so will I too give you great trouble, I am not going to die soon" She was kept in a tiled shed on the banks of the Ganges, where she remained living for three nights. During this time I was always there with her, by the river.

On the night before *Didima's* death I was sitting at Nimtola Ghat¹ on a coarse mat near the shed. It was the night of the full-moon, the moon had risen the burning-ground was near. They were singing the holy name to *Didima*. "Will such a day ever come when, uttering the name of *Harī*, life will leave me." The sounds reached my ears faintly, borne on the night-wind, at this opportune moment a strange sense of the unreality of all things suddenly entered my mind. I was as if no longer the same man. A strong aversion to wealth arose within me. The coarse bamboo-mat on which I sat seemed to be my fitting seat, carpets and costly spreadings seemed hateful, in my mind was awakened a joy unfelt before. I was then eighteen years old.

CHAPTER II.

Up to this time I had been plunged in a life of luxury and pleasure. I had never sought after spiritual truths. What was religion, what was God? I knew nothing, had learnt nothing. My mind could scarcely contain the unworldly joy, so simple and natural, which I experienced at the burning-ghat. Language is weak in every way, how can I make others understand the joy I felt? It was a spontaneous delight, to which nobody can attain by

¹ A burning ghat in Calcutta.

argument or logic. God himself seeks for the opportunity of pouring it out. He had vouchsafed it unto me in the fulness of time. Who says there is no God? This is proof enough of His existence. I was not prepared for it, whence then did I receive this joy?

With this sense of joy and renunciation, I returned home at midnight. That night I could not sleep. It was this blissful state of mind that kept me awake. Throughout the night my heart was suffused with a moonlight radiance of joy. At daybreak I went again to the riverside to see *Didima*. She was then drawing her last breaths. They had carried her into the midst of the *Ganges*, and were fervently crying aloud the names of "*Ganga Narayan Brahma*"¹. *Didima* breathed her last. I drew near and saw that her hand was placed on her breast, with the fourth finger pointing upwards. Turning her finger round and round, and crying *Haribol*, she passed into the next world. When I saw this it seemed to me that at the time of death she pointed out to me with uplifted finger, "That is God, and the Hereafter." As *Didima* had been my friend in this life, so was she the guide to the next.

— Her *shraddha* ceremony was celebrated with great pomp. Anointing ourselves with oil and turmeric, we went and planted the *vrusha kashtha*² of the *S'raddha* on the banks of the *Ganges*. These few days passed in a whirl of excitement and confusion. Then I tried to recover the joy of the night previous to *Didima's* death. But I never got it back. At this time the state of my mind was one of continued despondency and indifference to the world. On that night the indifference had been coupled with delight. Now, in the absence of that delight, a deep gloom settled on my mind. I longed for a repetition of that ecstatic feeling. I lost all interest in everything else. There is a story in *Bhagavata*, which might furnish a parallel to my case.

¹ The names of the Deity

² A sacrificial post with the figure of a bull at the top.

Narada is talking about himself thus to *Veda-nyasa*.¹ "In my former birth I was the son of a certain *Rishi's* maidservant. During the rainy season, many holy people used to come and seek refuge in that *Rishi's* hermitage. I used to minister to their wants. In course of time divine wisdom dawned upon me, and my mind was filled with a single hearted devotion to *Harī*. Then when those holy men were about to leave the hermitage they, in the goodness of their heart, taught me the mysteries of philosophy, which enabled me to understand clearly the glory of *Harī*. My mother was the *Rishi's* maidservant and I was her only son. "*Ekdāmayā me janāmi*" It was only for her sake that I could not leave the *Rishi's* *asrama*. One night she went out to milk the cows. On the way she was bitten by a black serpent that she had trod on, and she died. But I looked upon this event as a great opportunity for the fulfilment of my desire, and alone I entered a huge and terrible forest, still with the voice of *cicadas*. In the course of my wanderings I felt very hungry and thirsty. I relieved my fatigue by drinking and bathing in a pool of water. Then I went and sat underneath an *ashvattha* tree, and according to the teaching of the saints began meditating on the Spirit of God dwelling within the soul. My mind was flooded with emotion, my eyes were filled with tears. All at once I saw the shining vision of *Brahma* in the lotus core of my heart. A thrill passed through my whole body, I felt a joy beyond all measure. But the next moment I could see him no more. On losing sight of that beatific vision which destroys all sorrow, I suddenly rose from the ground. A great sadness came over my spirit. Then I tried to see Him again by force of contemplation, but found him not. I became as one stricken with disease, and would not be comforted. Meanwhile I suddenly heard a voice in the air, 'In this life thou shalt see me no more. Those whose hearts have not been purified, who have not attained the highest *Yoga*, cannot see me. It was only to stimulate thy love that I once appeared before thee."

I was exactly in the same position. For want of the joy of that

¹ *Vyasa Muni* who collected the *Vedas* and other *Shastras*.

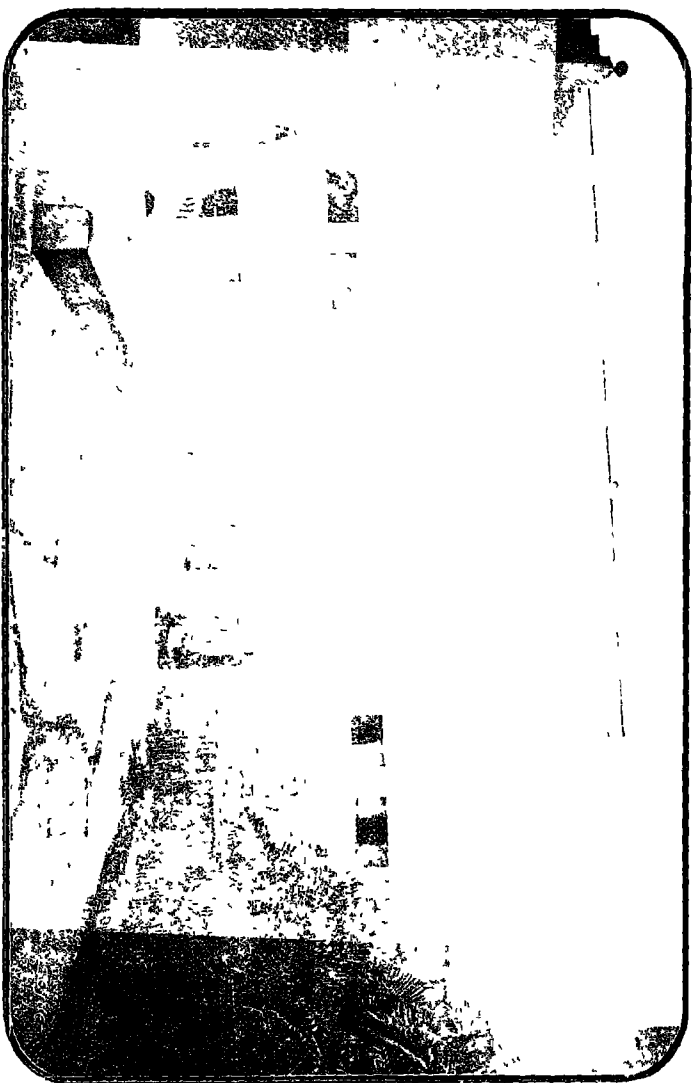
night, my heart was sore distressed. But it was that which awakened my love of God. Only in one point did my case differ from this story of *Nirada's*. His heart had first obtained love and faith by hearing the praise of *Hari* from the lips of the *Rishis*, and afterwards he received from them much instruction regarding the knowledge of *Brahma*. But I had had no opportunity of my love and faith being aroused by any such praises of *Hari*, nor had any one deigned to impart to me the truths of divine wisdom. The fair winds of luxury and pleasure were blowing all around me day and night. Yet in spite of these adverse circumstances, God in His mercy gave me the spirit of renunciation, and took away from me my attachment for the world. And then He who is the source of all joy gave me new life by pouring streams of joy into my mind. This mercy of His is beyond compare. He alone is my *Guru*. He alone is my Father.

CHAPTER III.

One day, after *Didima's* death, whilst sitting in my *boythakkhana*,¹ I said to those around me "To-day I have become a *kalpalatu*."² Whoever will ask of me anything that it is in my power to give, that will I give to him. Nobody else asked me for anything, except my cousin Braja Babu, who said, "Give me those two big mirrors, give me those pictures, give me that gold-laced dress suit." I immediately gave him all these. The next day he brought men and took away all the *boythakkhana* things. There were some good pictures and other valuable articles of furniture, he took them all away. In this manner I gave away all my things. But the grief in my

¹ Men's sitting-room

² The wishing-tree that gives all you may want.



Family Dwelling House—Jorasanko

heart remained just the same, nothing could dispel it. I knew not where to turn for solace. Sometimes, lying on a sofa and pondering over problems about God, I used to become so absent-minded, that I did not know when I had got up from my couch and taken my meals, and lain down again. I used to feel as if I had been lying there the whole time. I would go alone to the Botanical Gardens in the middle of the day, whenever I got a chance. It was a very secluded solitary spot. I used to take my seat on a tombstone in the middle of the gardens. Great grief was in my heart. Darkness was all around me. The temptations of the world had ceased, but the sense of God was no nearer—earthly and heavenly happiness were alike withdrawn. Life was dreary, the world was like a graveyard. I found happiness in nothing, peace in nothing. The rays of the midday sun seemed to me black. At that time this song suddenly broke from my lips, "Vain, oh! vain is the light of day, without knowledge all is dark as night." This was my first song. I used to sing it out loud sitting alone on that tombstone.

I then felt a strong desire to learn Sanskrit. From my boyhood I had been fond of Sanskrit. I used to carefully commit to memory the *Slokas* of *Chanakya*. Whenever I heard a good *sloka* I learnt it by heart. There was then in our house a family *Pundit*. His name was Kamalakanta Chudamani, his home Bansberia. Formerly he was attached to the family of Gopinohun Tagore; then he came to us. He was a learned man of strong character. I was then young, and he was very fond of me, whilst I looked up to him with reverence. One day I said to him "I will read *Mugdhabodha Vyakarana*¹ with you." He said "Do, by all means. I will teach it to you." Then I commenced the *Mugdhabodha* with Chudamani, and began learning by heart *ja da ga ba, jha dha gha bha*². It was as a means of acquiring the knowledge of Sanskrit that I first threw myself enthusiastically into the study of *Mugdhabodha* with Chudamani. One day he quietly took out a piece of paper with his writing on it, and putting it into my hand

¹ The Sanskrit Grammar by Vopadev, the ordinary text-book on Grammar used in Bengal.

² Letters of the alphabet

said "Put your signature to this." "What is this writing?" I asked. On reading it I found it said I would have to support his son Shyamacharan for life. I signed it then and there. I had great love and respect for Chudamani, so I put down my signature at his request without any hesitation. I gave no thought at the time to what it meant. Shortly afterwards our *sabha pundit*¹ Chudamani died. Then Shyamacharan came to me, with that bit of signed paper, and said "My father is dead I am helpless, you will now have to support me. See here, you have already promised to do so." I agreed to this, and from that time Shyamacharan stayed with me. He knew some Sanskrit. I asked him where I could find truths regarding the Godhead. "In the *Mahabharata*"² he answered. Then I began reading the *Mahabharata* with him. On opening the book, one particular *sloka* struck my eye, which is as follows —

"धर्ममतिर्भवतु च सततोल्लिखितानां सञ्ज्ञक एव परलोकगतस्य बन्धुः ।"

"धर्मोऽस्त्रियश्च निपुणैरपि ज्ञेयमानो नैवात्मभावमुपयन्ति न च स्थिरत्वम्"

"May you have faith in religion, may you always be devoted to religion, religion alone is the friend of him who has entered the next world. However well you may serve Mammon and woman, you can never bring them under control nor are they ever constant."

On reading this *sloka* of the *Mahabharata*, I felt greatly inspired. I had an idea that in all languages, as in Bengali and English, adjectives preceded nouns. But in Sanskrit I found the noun was here, and the adjective right away over there. It took me some time to master this. I read through a good portion of the *Mahabharata*. I remember quite well Upamanyu's reverence for his *guru* in the story of *Dhaumya Rishi*. Now that voluminous book has become accessible to the reading public through translation. But in those days very few people used to read it in the original. My thirst for spiritual knowledge led me to read a great deal of it.

¹ Family pundit who usually presides at assemblies of learned pundits.

² Ancient India, like ancient Greece, boasts of two great epics—the *Mahabharata*, based on the legends and traditions of a great historical war, is the *Iliad* of India, while the *Ramayana* describing the wanderings and adventures of a prince banished from his country may be compared to the *Odyssey*.

As on the one hand there were my Sanskrit studies in the search after truth, so on the other hand there was English. I had read numerous English works on philosophy. But with all this, the sense of emptiness of mind remained just the same, nothing could heal it, my heart was being oppressed by that gloom of sadness and feeling of unrest. Did subjection to nature comprise the whole of man's existence? I asked. Then indeed are we undone. The might of this monster is indomitable. Fire, at a touch, reduces everything to ashes. Put out to sea in a vessel, whirlpools will drag you down to the bottom, gales will throw you into dire distress. There is no escape from the clutches of this Nature-fiend. If bowing down to her decree be our end and aim, then indeed are we undone. What can we hope for, whom can we trust? Again I thought, as things are reflected on a photographic plate by the rays of the sun, so are material objects manifested to the mind by the senses, this is what is called knowledge. Is there any other way but this of obtaining knowledge? These were the suggestions that Western philosophy had brought to my mind. To an atheist this is enough, he does not want anything beyond nature. But how could I rest fully satisfied with this? My endeavour was to obtain God, not through blind faith but by the light of knowledge. And being unsuccessful in this, my mental struggles increased from day to day. Sometimes I thought I could live no longer.

CHAPTER IV.

Suddenly, as I thought and thought, a flash as of lightning broke through this darkness of despondency. I saw that knowledge of the material world is born of the senses and the objects of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. But together with this knowledge, I am also enabled to know that I am the knower. Simultaneously with the facts of seeing, touching smelling and thinking, I also come

to know that it is I who see, touch, smell and think. With the knowledge of objects comes the knowledge of the subject, with the knowledge of the body comes the knowledge of the spirit within. It was after a prolonged search for truth that I found this bit of light, as if a ray of sunshine had fallen on a place full of extreme darkness. I now realised that with the knowledge of the outer world we come to know our inner self. After this, the more I thought over it, the more did I recognize the sway of wisdom operating throughout the whole world. For us the sun and moon rise and set at regular intervals, for us the wind and rain are set in motion in the proper seasons. All these combine to fulfil the one design of preserving our life. Whose design is this? It cannot be the design of matter, it must be the design of mind. Therefore this universe is propelled by the power of an intelligent being.

I saw that the child, as soon as born, drinks at its mother's breast. Who taught it to do this? He alone, who gave it life. Again who put love into the mother's heart? Who but He that put milk into her breast. He is that God who knows all our wants, whose rule the universe obeys. When my mind's eye had opened thus far, the clouds of grief were in a great measure dispelled. I felt somewhat consoled.

One day, while thinking of these things I suddenly recalled how, long ago, in my early youth, I had once realised the Infinite as manifested in the infinite heavens. Again I turned my gaze towards this infinite sky, studded with innumerable stars and planets, and saw the eternal God, and felt that this glory was His. He is infinite wisdom, He from whom we have derived this limited knowledge of ours, and this body, its receptacle,—is Himself without form. He is without body or senses. He did not shape this universe with his hands. By His will alone did He bring it into existence. He is neither the *Kali*¹ of Kalighat, nor the family *Shalgram*. Thus was laid the axe at the root of idolatry. In studying the mechanism of creation, we find evidences of the wisdom of the Creator. On looking at the starry sky, we feel that He is infinite. By the help of

¹ The presiding deity of the temple.

this slender thread, His attributes became clearer to my mind. I saw that no one could frustrate the will of Him Who is Infinite Wisdom. Whatever He wills, comes to pass. We collect all the necessary materials, and then make a thing, He by His will, creates all the materials necessary for the making of things. He is not only the maker of the world, but what is more, He is its Creator. All created things are transient, corruptible, changeable, and dependent. The Perfect Wisdom that has created them and is guiding them, that alone is eternal, incorruptible, unchangeable, and self-dependent. That eternal, true and perfect Being is the source of all good, and the object of all worship. After debating in my mind for days and days I made sure of this much, after continuous and strenuous endeavour I arrived at this conclusion. And yet my heart kept trembling. The path of knowledge is beset with difficulties. Who would bear me up, cheer and encourage me along this path? Who would give his assent to the conclusion I had arrived at? Do you know what kind of assent I mean? Like that which I received from a boatman of the Padma.¹

I had once been to our Zenundari in Kaligram,² and was returning home after a long time. I was in a boat on the Padma. It was then the rainy season. Dark masses of cloud were in the sky, and a strong gale had sprung up. The Padma was in a mighty turmoil, and the boatman, seeing a heavy storm approaching, dared not proceed, and made the boat fast to the shore. Even there the boat could not keep still for the waves. But I had been away for so long that I was in a hurry to get home. When there was a slight lull in the storm at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I asked the boatman, "Can you put out the boat now?" He said, "I can, if *huzoor* so commands." "Then let go," I said. But considerable time passed, and yet the boat did not move. Half-an hour elapsed, still it showed no signs of leaving. Calling the boatman I said, "Just now you told me you could start if I so ordered. I have given my orders, why then have you not yet star-

¹ River Padma a branch of the Ganges

² Landed estates in Rajshahi District.

ted? The storm has now abated a little, there is no knowing when it may burst upon us again. If we are going, let us start at once." He said "The old *Dewanji*¹ said to me, 'What are you about, you fool of a boatman? In the first place don't you see this is the confluence of the Sarda, no signs of the opposite bank are to be seen anywhere; then again it is the last day (*sankranti*) of *Shavana*, even by the shore the boat can't keep itself steady against the shock of the waves. And you actually want to cross such a Padma at such a time!' These words of the *Dewanji* frightened me so much that I could not put out." "Start" I said, and he immediately unfastened the boat and put up the sails. One sudden blast of wind drove the boat at once into the middle of the stream. Hundreds of boats were tied to the shore, all the men cried out with one voice "Don't go now, don't go now." Then my heart sank within me. What could I do,—there was no returning. The boat rushed onward with sails outspread. After going some distance I saw that wave upon wave had swollen up like a wall in front. The boat leapt forward to pierce through it, and I became thoroughly unnerved. At this juncture I saw not very far off a little *dingi*² that was coming from the opposite shore, like a *mocha*³ leaf tossed about by winds and waves. Seeing how bold we were, the boatman cried out encouragingly "No fear, go ahead." Who was there to join with me in hearty unison and buoy me up like this? Such was the nature of the response I wanted. But alas, who would give it me?

CHAPTER V.

As soon as I came to understand that God was without form or image, a strong antipathy to idolatry arose in my mind. I remembered

¹ The manager.

² A small boat.

³ Canoe-shaped calyx of the plantain flower.



Raja Rammohan Roy

Rammohun Roy¹—I came to my senses I pledged myself heart and soul to follow in his footsteps

Since my childhood I had been in touch with Rammohun Roy I used to attend his school There were other and better schools, there was the Hindu College But my father sent me to that school at the instance of Rammohun Roy The school was situated by the side of the Hedua tank Nearly every Saturday, when school broke up at 2 o'clock I used to accompany Ramaprasad Roy to Rammohun Roy's garden house at Maniktala On other days too I used to visit him Sometimes I went and played many mischievous pranks there I used to pluck the *luchis* and pick the green peas in the garden and eat them in great glee One day Rammohun Roy said 'Brother why loiter about in the sun? Sit down here and eat as many *luchis* as you can' To the *nai* he said 'Go and get *luchis* from the trees and bring them here' He immediately brought a plateful of *luchis* Then Rammohun Roy said 'Eat as many *luchis* as you like His appearance was calm and dignified I used to look up to him with great respect and reverence

There was a swing in the garden in which Rammohun Roy used to swing by way of exercise When I went to the garden of an afternoon he used to make me sit in it and swing me himself After a time he would sit in it himself and say 'Brother now it is your turn to push'

I was the eldest son of my father On any ceremonial occasion it was I who had to go from house to house inviting people It was the time of the *Durga Pooja*² in the month of *Aswin*³ I went

¹ The great Indian Reformer founder of the Brahmo Samaj born in Radhargui, a Village in Hoogly District (Bengal) in A.D. 1774 Died, 27th September, 1833 at Bristol (England)

² Rammohun had two sons Rudhaprasad and Ramaprasad, he had also a foster son who accompanied him to England Ramaprasad was the first Indian Judge of the Calcutta High Court appointed shortly before his death On hearing of the appointment he is said to have exclaimed—I can't accept it now, I am going to appear before a higher Court'

³ The great religious festival in Bengal

⁴ September-October

to invite Rammohan Roy to this festival and said " Rammoni Thakur¹ begs to invite you to see the *Poojāh* for three days " Upon this he said, " Brother, why come to me ? Go and ask Radhaprasad " Now after all this lapse of time I understood the purport and meaning of those words Since then I inwardly resolved that as] Rammohan Roy did not take part in any image-worship or idolatry so would I not join in them either I would not worship any image, I would not bow down before any image, I would not accept an invitation to any idolatrous *poojah* From that time my mind was fully made up I little knew then what a fiery ordeal I was to pass through

I formed a party with my brothers We all resolved that we would not go to the sanctuary during the *poojah* and even if we went, none of us would bow down before the idol My father used then to go to the sanctuary in the evening, at the time of the *arati*, so that we too had to go there in deference to him But when the time came for saluting, and everybody bowed down to the ground, we remained standing,—nobody could see whether we performed the obeisance or not

Whenever I came across idolatrous preachings in any *shastra* I no longer felt any reverence for it An erroneous impression was then created in my mind to the effect that all our *shastras* were full of idolatry, and that it was therefore impossible to extract from them truths pertaining to the formless and changeless Deity When I was in this depressed state of mind, one day all of a sudden I saw a page from some Sanskrit book flutter past me Out of curiosity I picked it up, but found I could understand nothing of what was written on it I said to Shyamacharan Bhattacharya who was sitting by me, " I will come home soon, after attending to the business of the Union Bank In the meantime do you decipher the meaning of the verses on this page, so that you can explain it all to me on my return from office " Saying this I hurried off to the Bank At

that time I had a post in the Union Bank. My youngest uncle Ramanath Tagore was the cashier, and I his assistant. I had to stay there from 10 o'clock until the day's work was over. It took us up to 10 o'clock at night to make up accounts. But on that day as I was to have the page out of the Sanskrit book explained to me by Shyamacharan Bhattacharya I could not brook the delay of balancing accounts. So with my uncle's permission I came home early. I hurried up to the *boythakkhana* on the third storey, and asked Shyama Charan Bhattacharya to explain to me what was written on the printed page. He said, "I have been trying hard all this time, but cannot make out its meaning." This astonished me. English scholars can understand every book in the English language, why then cannot Sanskrit scholars understand every Sanskrit book? "Who can make it out then?" I asked. He said, "This is all about the Brahma Sabha,¹ Ramchandra Vidyavagish of the Sabha could probably explain it." "Then call him," said I. Soon afterwards Vidyavagish came to me. On reading the page he said, "Why, this is the *Isopanishat*!"

When I learnt the explanation of "*Isavāsyamidam sarvam*" from *Vidyavagish*, nectar from paradise streamed down upon me. I had been eager to receive a sympathetic response from men, now a divine voice had descended from heaven to respond in my heart of hearts, and my longing was satisfied. I wanted to see God everywhere, and what did I find in the Upanishads? I found "If the whole world could be encompassed by God, where would impurity be? Then all would be pure, the world would be full of sweetness." I got just what I wanted. I had never heard my most intimate thoughts expressed like this anywhere else. Could men give any such response? The very mercy of God Himself descended into my heart, therefore I under-

¹ The religious association established by Rammohun Roy

² The Upanishads contain the higher religion of the Vedas. *Īśa* is one of the twelve well known Upanishads, or philosophical treatises regarded as revelation (Śruti). Of these Schopenhauer, one of the greatest philosophical critics of Germany says "In the whole world there is no study so refined and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life. It will be the solace of my death."

stood the deep significance of "*Iśtasyamidam sarvam*" Oh, what words were those that struck my ears! "*Tena tyaktena bhunjitha*" Enjoy that which He has given unto thee What is it that He has given? He has given Himself Enjoy that untold treasure, leave everything else and enjoy that supreme treasure Cleave unto Him alone and give up all else Blessed beyond measure is he who cleaves unto Him alone. This tells me that which I have long desired

The keenness of my sorrow lay in this, that I was dead to all happiness, earthly and divine, I could take no delight in the things of this world, I could feel no joy in God

But when the divine voice declared that I should renounce all desire of worldly pleasure and take my delight in God alone, I obtained what I had wished for, and was utterly flooded with joy It was not the dictum of my own poor intellect, it was the word of God Himself Glory be to that *Rishi* in whose heart this truth was first revealed My faith in God took deep root, in lieu of worldly pleasure I tasted divine joy Oh! what a blessed day was that for me,—a day of heavenly happiness! Every word of the Upanishads tended to enlighten my mind With their help I duly advanced along my appointed path All the deeper significances began to be revealed to me One by one I read with *Vidyāvāgish* the *Iśa*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Mundak* and *Mandukya* Upanishads, and the remaining six with other *pundits* What I read each day, I at once committed to memory, and repeated the next day to Vidyāvāgish Hearing my enunciation of the Vedas he would ask "Whence did you learn this pronunciation? I must say we cannot pronounce like that" I learnt the pronunciation of the Vedas from a Dravidian Vedic *brahman*

When I had thoroughly entered into the Upanishads, and when my intellect began to be daily illumined by the light of truth, I felt a strong desire to spread the true religion As a beginning I proposed to form an association with my brothers, friends and relatives There was a small room near the tank in our grounds, which I had whitewashed and cleaned Meanwhile the *Durga Poojah* season commenced All the other members of our family gave



themselves up to the excitement of this festival. Should we alone remain with empty hearts ? On that *Krishna-chaturdasi*¹ we founded an association with hearts full of enthusiasm. We all bathed early in the morning, and in a purified state went and sat in that clean little room by the tank. It seemed as if Faith entered my heart as soon as I took my seat there with the others. As I looked around, each face was animated with reverence. The whole room was filled with an atmosphere of purity. After invoking the Deity with a fervid heart, I discoursed upon this text of the *Kathopanishad*

“न सांपराय प्रतिभाति बालं प्रमादन्त विचक्षीहि न मुढ” ।

अथ लोकोनास्ति पर इति सान्नी पुनः पुनश्चमापद्यते मे ।”

“The Hereafter is hidden from the eyes of the foolish and of those blinded by riches. Those who think that this world alone exists and there is no future existence, they come again and again under my joke (that of Death) .” Everybody listened to my discourse in a sacred and solemn mood. This was my first sermon. When it was over, I proposed that this *Sabha* should be called the “*Tatvaranjini Sabha*,” and should be made permanent. All agreed to this. The object of this association was to gain the knowledge of God. The evening of the first Sunday in every month was the time appointed for the meeting of this assembly. At the second meeting Ramchandra Vidyavagish was invited, and I ordained him *acharya* (chief minister) of this *Sabha*. He named it “*Tatwabodhini*” instead of “*Tatvaranjini*” . Thus the *Tatwabodhini Sabha* was founded on Sunday, the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight, the 21st Ashwin, 1761 shaka (6th October, 1839) .

CHAPTER VI.

The *Tatwabodhini Sabha* was inaugurated on the 21st *Ashwin, shaka* 1761. Its object was the diffusion of the deep truth of all our *shastras* and the knowledge of *Brahma* as inculcated in the *Vedanta*. It was the *Upanishads* that we considered to be the *Vedanta*,—we did not place much reliance on the teachings of the *Vedanta* philosophy. On the first day there were only ten members. Gradually the number began to increase. The first few meetings were held in a spacious hall on the ground-floor of my house, but later on we rented a house in Sukea Street. That house is now owned by Babu Kalikissen Tagore. It was at this time that I made the acquaintance of Akshay Kumar Dutt¹. He was introduced to me by Ishwar Chandra Gupta² and became a member of the *Tatwabodhini Sabha*. The association held its sittings at night on the first Sunday of each month, and Ramchandra Vidyavagish addressed the meeting in his capacity of minister. Each time he used to read out this *sloka* —

“रूपं रूपविवर्जितस्य भवतो ध्यानेन यद्वर्णितम् ।

सुखानिर्वचनीयताखिलगुरो दूरीकृता यन्मया ।

व्यापित्व च विनाशितं भगवतो यत्तीर्थयावादिना ।

चक्षन्त्य जगदीश तद्विकलतादीष्वयं सत्कृतम् ॥”

“O spiritual guide of the universe, thou art without form, yet that I have conceived thine image in the act of meditation, that I have ignored thine inexpressibility by words of praise, that I have nullified thy omnipresence by making pilgrimages, and in other ways,

¹ Akshay Kumar has left a name behind him for his literary works. In 1843 he became the Editor of the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*, a monthly journal started in connection with the *Tatwabodhini Sabha* and for some years conducted the paper with marked ability. His style was superior to that of any other Bengali journalist of the day. In 1855 his constitution, never a strong one, gave way and he was compelled to give up writing. Even in this invalid state, however, he compiled his famous and learned work, “The Religious sects of India” with the help of an amanuensis. He passed his last days in retirement in Bali. Here he died on the 14th *Jaishtha*, 1886, leaving behind him many thoughtful and instructive works in Bengali.

² Editor of the *Prabhakar* a Bengali daily, and a popular poet of the day.

for these three transgressions committed through confusion of spirit, O Almighty God, I implore thy forgiveness."

All the members had the right to speak at meetings of this association. But there was a special rule that the one who first gave his manuscript into the hands of the secretary would alone be entitled to read his dissertation. Owing to this rule some of us used to go and put their manuscripts in the secretary's bed, under his pillow, the object being that he should get it the first thing in the morning when he rose. In the third year the first anniversary of this *Tatwabodhini Sabha* was celebrated with great pomp. Two years had gone by, yet the number of members did not seem to me satisfactory, nor the existence of such a *Sabha* sufficiently well known. Whilst I was occupied with these thoughts, the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight of *Bhadra* 1763, gradually came round. I wanted to make this anniversary the occasion of a grand meeting so as to make it generally known to everybody. In those days advertising was not of much use in spreading news. So what I did was to send a note of invitation in the name of every employee in all the offices and firms throughout Calcutta. Each one came to office and saw on his desk a letter addressed to himself,—on opening which he found an invitation from the *Tatwabodhini Sabha*. They had never even heard the name of the *Sabha*. For our part we were busy the whole day. How to decorate well the rooms of the *Sabha*, what lessons to read and what sermons to give, what part each one should take,—these furnished the objects of our preparations. Before it was dusk we had the lamps lighted, the *Sabha* decorated, and all arrangements complete. Would any of those invited come, I asked myself in a state of suspense. Soon after dark I saw people coming in one by one preceded by a lantern. We all received them warmly and seated them on benches in the garden in front of the *Sabha*. By degrees people flocked in and filled the garden. The sight of them all inspired us with fresh zeal. None of them could make out why they had come, and what was going to happen. Every now and again I anxiously looked at my watch to see whether it was yet eight o'clock. As soon as it struck eight, conches, bells and horns were

sounded from the terrace, and all the doors of the room were flung open all at once. They were all taken by surprise. We then requested them to come inside and take their seats. In front was the *vedi*, on either side of which were seated ten Dravidian *brahmins* in two rows, twenty in all, robed in red. Rāmchandra Vidyāvāgish sat on the *vedi*. The Dravidian *brahmins* began to chant the *Vedas* in unison. It was past ten before the recital of the *Vedas* was finished. Then I got up and delivered my discourse, in the course of which I said, "There is no doubt whatever that the study of the English language is tending to advance the cause of learning, and that the darkness of ignorance has been dispelled in a great measure from the minds of the people of this country. Nowadays they do not feel disposed to worship stocks and stones like the ignorant masses, thinking them to be divine. Not being well acquainted with the *vedānta*, they do not know that the gist of our *śāstras* is that God is formless, the very essence of intelligence, omnipresent, beyond all thought or speech. So, not finding this pure knowledge of God in their own religion, they go to seek it in the *śāstras* of other religions. They firmly believe that our *śāstras* inculcate image-worship only, therefore they revere those *śāstras* which seem to them to be higher than their own. But if the *vedānta* were spread far and wide, then we would never feel drawn to other religions. Thus we are trying to preserve our Hindu religion." After my discourse, Shyāmā Charan Bhattācharya delivered his,—he was followed by Chandranath Ray, then came Umesh Chandra Ray, after that Prasanna Chandra Ghosh, then Akshay Kumar Datta and lastly Rāmāprasād Rāy. This took us nearly up to midnight. When all this was over, Rāmchandra Vidyāvāgish treated us to a disquisition. Then hymns were sung, It struck two. The people were tired out. They had all come straight from office, probably some of them had not yet washed or had anything to eat, in deference to me nobody could leave before the assemblage broke up. Most likely none had heard or understood anything, but the proceedings of the *sabha* were brought to a close with great *éclat*. This was the first anniversary of our *Tatuvabodhini Sabha* and this was the last.

After this event, in 1764¹ (1842 A.D.) I joined the Brahmo Samaj. The founder of the Samaj, the illustrious Rammohan Roy, had died eleven years before this in Bristol, (England). I thought to myself that as the Brahma Samaj had been established for the worship of Brahma, our object would be the more easily attained by amalgamating the *Tatwabodhini Sabha* with it. With this view, I paid a visit to the Samaj on a Wednesday. I saw a Dravidian *brahmin* reciting the *Upanishads* just before sunset, in one of the side rooms of the Samaj. Ramchandra Vidyavagish, Ishwar Chandra Nyayaratna and one or two other *brahmins* were the only ones sitting there listening. *Sudras* were not allowed to attend. After sunset Ramchandra Vidyavagish and Ishwarchandra Nyayratna sat in public on the *vedi* in the Samaj hall. Here *brahmins* and *sudras* and all castes had equal rights. I noticed that there were very few people present. To the right of the *vedi* was spread a white floor-cloth, on which were seated four or five worshippers. And on the left were placed a few chairs, which were occupied by three or four visitors. Ishwar Chandra Nyayratna expounded the *Upanishads*, and Pundit Vidyavagish began to explain the *Mimansa*² of the Vedanta philosophy. In front of the *vedi* the brothers Krishna and Vishnu sang hymns in unison. The service was over at 9 o'clock. After this experience, I took upon myself the task of reforming the Brahma Samaj and amalgamated the *Tatwabodhini Sabha* with it. It was arranged that the *Tatwabodhini Sabha* would look after the interests of the Brahma Samaj. From that time forward the monthly morning service of the Brahma Samaj was instituted in place of the monthly meeting of the *Tatwabodhini Sabha* and instead of the anniversary of the Sabha on the 21st Ashwin, the date of the opening day of the Brahma Samaj *viz* the 11th of Magh, (23rd or 24th January) was fixed upon for its anniversary. In the month of *Bhadra* 1750, the Brahma Samaj was first founded in a hired house belonging to Kamal Basu in Jorasanko. And the

¹ The S'aka Era

² The Vedanta is divided into two systems—Purva Mimansa by Jaimini, which is more a system of ritualism than philosophy, and Uttara Mimansa, which is the Vedanta proper, founded on the Upanishads.

anniversary of this, which used to be held in *Bhadra*, had been discontinued since 1744, before I joined the Brahma Samaj

When we took charge of the Brahma Samaj, we began to consider as the first step towards improvement how to increase the number of its followers. Gradually by the grace of God and through our efforts the attendance became larger, and consequently the accommodation also increased. This was enough to add to our enthusiasm. Formerly the Samaj was divided into two or three rooms, in course of time these were broken up and a spacious hall now stands in their place. As the room grew wider and the attendance increased, we thought to ourselves that the Brâhma religion was gaining ground. What a source of delight this was to us!

CHAPTER VII.

In the Upanishads I found the echo of the idea of God that had been revealed to my heart after long continuous struggle and endeavour, and in my own heart I found a response to whatever I could interpret of the Upanishads by careful study. So that I came to regard the Upanishads with a profound reverence. My heart tells me He is my Father, Protector and Friend, in the Upanishads I find the same thing translated, "sa no bandhuranitâ sa vidhâtâ"¹ Without Him children and riches and honours are all as nothing to me. He is dearer than son, dearer than riches, dearer than all else. Turning to the Upanishads, I find this translated thus, "तदेतत् मेयं पुत्रात् प्रयोजितात् प्रयोजन्यात् सर्वस्यात्"² I do not desire wealth, I do not desire honours, then what do I desire? The Upanishad answers "ब्रह्मैवासीत् ब्रह्मवान् भवति" He who worships Brahma becomes possessed of Brahma. To this I say Aye, indeed so it is. He who worships wealth becomes possessed of wealth, he who worships honours becomes possessed of honours,

¹ He is our friend, our father. He is the dispenser, the arbiter of our destiny.

² This Atman is dearer than son, dearer than riches, dearer than all else.

he who worships Brahma becomes possessed of Brahma. When I saw in the Upanishads “यः ब्रह्मदा ब्रह्मदा” I found my inmost thoughts expressed. He has not only given us life, but has given us our soul also. He is not only the life of our life, but the soul of our soul. He has created our soul from out of His own. That one, constant, changeless soul, who is infinite wisdom, has created innumerable finite souls, remaining the while eternally true to his own nature. I found this laid down expressly in the Upanishads, “एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति” “He who makes one form into many” By worshipping Him I obtain Him as the result. He is the worshipful, I am His worshipper, He is my Master, I am his servant, He is my Father, I am his son. This was my guiding principle. To disseminate this truth throughout India, to induce everybody to worship Him in this manner, to ensure that his glory should be thus proclaimed everywhere,—this became the sole aim of my life. In order to carry out this project a printing-press and a journal became necessary.

I thought to myself that many members of the Tatwabodhini Sabha were working in a disconnected fashion. They got no notice of meetings of the Sabha, or were often unable to be present. Many of them did not know what was going on in the Sabha. More especially, they could not hear the discourses of Vidyavagish, which ought to be more widely known. It was also necessary to give greater publicity to the books written with a view to propagate the knowledge of God by Rammohan Roy during his lifetime. Besides this, those subjects which tend to educate the mind and and elevate the character of man should also be published. With these objects in view, I determined to bring out the Tatwabodhini Patrika in 1765 (1843). For this paper it was necessary to appoint an editor. I examined the essays of several members, but the literary merits of Akshoy Kumar Datta made me select him. In his essay there appeared to me to be good points as well as bad. The good points were that his style was very charming and graceful. The fault that I found with it was that he had sung the praises of the matted-haired, ash-begrimed sannyasi living under a tree. But I was not a partisan of the symbolism of outward renunciation. I thought, however, that if I was

careful about the opinions expressed, I could certainly utilize him as an editor. And that is what practically came to pass. I appointed Akshoj Babu on a handsome salary. I used to pen through such portions of his writings as went contrary to my opinions, and try to bring him round to my point of view. But this was not an easy matter for me, we were poles asunder. I was seeking to know my relations with God, he was seeking to know the relations of man with the outer world. The difference was as between heaven and earth. In the end, with the assistance of a man like him, I was enabled to realise my ambitions with regard to the *Tātwabodhini Patrika*. In those days few men possessed his beauty of style. Only a small number of newspapers then existed, and they did not contain any articles conducive to public welfare or instruction. The *Tātwabodhini Patrika* first supplied this want in Bengal. The propagation of the Vedas, the Vedānta and the worship of Parabrahma, my principal object, was amply fulfilled by the publication of this patrika.

Those Upanishads which treated of Brahma, were alone accepted by us as the true Vedānta. We had no faith in the Vedānta philosophy, because Shankaracharya¹ seeks to prove therein that Brahma and all created beings are one and the same. What we want is to worship God. If the worshipper and the object of worship become one, then how can there be any worship? Therefore we could not subscribe to the doctrines of the Vedānta philosophy. We were opposed to Monism just in the same way as we were opposed to idolatry. We were unable to fully acquiesce in the commentaries of the Upanishads as made by Shankaracharya, inasmuch as he has tried to interpret them all in a Monistic sense. For this reason I had to write a new commentary of the Upanishads in place of the Bhashya.² I made a Sanskrit commentary which would serve to maintain the theistic basis and I began a Bengali translation which came out part by part in the *Tātwabodhini Patrika*.

¹ The famous philosopher, a native of Malabar, born about A.D. 708. Wrote countless works, including commentaries on the Vedānta Sūtras, the Upanishads and Bhagavādgītā. His name is intimately associated with the revival of Brahminism, which ended in during Buddhism out of India.

² The accepted commentary of Sankarachārya.



Dwarkanath Tagore

CHAPTER VIII.

The printing-press of the Tatwabodhini Patrika was first set up in a house at Hedua. It was the same Hedua house where Rammohan Roy's school was held and where I used to go. Ramchandra Vidyavagish used to come to this press to read the Upanishads and the Vedanta philosophy with me. He dared not do this in our own house, as something which my father had said had frightened him. One day, being annoyed with Vidyavagish, he had remarked "I always thought Vidyavagish was a good fellow, but now I find he is spoiling Devendra with his preaching of *Brahma-mantras*. As it is he has very little head for business, now he neglects business altogether, it is nothing but Brahma, Brahma the whole day." My father had some reason to be annoyed. When Lord Auckland was Governor-General a grand dinner was given in our Belgachia garden to his sister Miss Eden and other distinguished ladies and gentlemen. Beauty and wit, rank and elegance, dancing and wine and dazzling lights all combined to turn the garden into a veritable paradise. Some wellknown Bengali gentlemen, after seeing this sumptuous feast in honour of the English remarked, "All that he cares for is to entertain English people, he never invites Bengalis." This remark reached my father's ears. So after some time he gave a brilliant party with nautches and music in the same garden to which all the notable Bengali gentlemen were invited. On that day it was especially incumbent on me to receive and entertain them. But it so happened that that very day was the date fixed for the meeting of our Tatwabodhini Sabha. I was ardently engrossed with the Sabha on that day, we were to worship God, therefore I was unable to neglect this all-important duty and attend the garden party. Lest I should incur my father's displeasure I put in an appearance on the scene of gaiety and then hurried back. This event clearly demonstrated to my father my utter distaste for the world. From that time forwards he took care not to let me be perverted by reading the Vedanta and giving myself up to Brahma. His great desire was that I should follow his example and reach the topmost heights of rank and fame and worldly honours. But he was greatly grieved and pained to see the very reverse of this in my mind. And yet he had not grasped all my thoughts and

aspirations,—did not know that at that very moment my heart was repeating, “What is life to me without Thee;”—that I had read in the Upanishads these words “न वित्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्यः”¹ Was it possible for anyone to drag me down into the world again?—to lure me away from God any more? Vidyavagish got frightened and came and said to me “The *Karta* is against it, so I can’t give you any more lessons” It was for this reason that I asked him not to come to the house, but to come and read with me at the printing office and this is what he used to do

- When I first visited the Brahma Samaj, I noticed that the Vedas were recited in a private room from which Sudras were excluded. As the object of the Brahma Samaj was to popularise the worship of Brahma, as it was expressly mentioned in the Trust Deed that all men should be able to worship Brahma without distinction of caste, —I was deeply grieved to find the very reverse of this in practice. Again I saw one day that Ramchandra Vidyavagish’s colleague, Ishwar Chandra Nayaratna, was trying to establish, from the *vedī* of the Brahma Samaj, the fact of the incarnation of Ramchandra, King of Ayodhya This struck me as being opposed to the spirit of Brahma Dharma In order to counteract this, I arranged that the Vedas should be read out in public and forbade the exposition of the doctrine of incarnation from the *vedī* In those days there was a dearth of learned men who could recite the Vedas and preach the doctrines of the Brahma religion So I set about finding pupils in order to train them up. I advertised in the papers that whoever successfully passed a given examination in Sanskrit would be admitted into the Tatwabodhini Sabha and would get a scholarship to enable him to prosecute his studies On the day fixed for the examination five or six candidates were examined by Vidyavagish. Out of these Ananda Chandra and Taraknath were selected. I was very fond of both. Because Ananda Chandra wore his hair long I playfully used to call him by the pet-name of “Sukesha.”²

¹ Man cannot be satisfied by riches.

² A man with a fine head of hair.

CHAPTER IX.

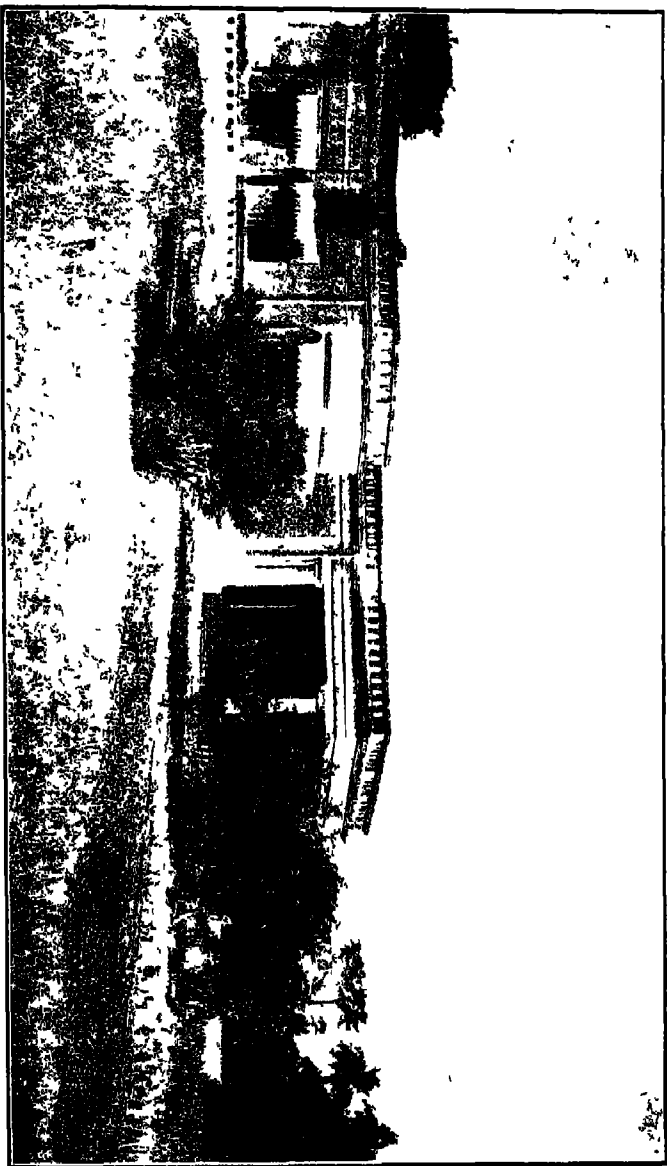
One day I was sitting in the printing office thinking that there was no religious unity among the members of the Brahma Samaj. People kept coming and going to and from the Samaj like the ebb and flow of the tide, but they were not linked together by a common religious belief. So when the number of visitors to the Samaj began to increase, I thought it necessary to pick and choose from among them. Some came really to worship, others came without any definite aim,—whom should we recognize as the true worshipper of Brahma? Upon these considerations I decided that those who would take a vow to renounce idolatry and resolve to worship one God, these alone would be regarded as Brâhmas. Considering that there was a Brâhma Samâj, each member must of course be a Brâhma. It may appear to many at first sight that the Brâhma Samâj was formed out of the Brâhma community. But such was not the case. The name Brâhma was fixed upon by the Brâhma Samaj. No undertaking succeeds without method. Therefore in order that the conversion to Brahma Dharma might be made in due form, in order that the worship of Brahma might be substituted for image-worship, I drew up a declaration of faith for initiation into the Brahma Dharma, which contained a clause to the effect that daily worship was to be performed by means of the *Gayatri-mantra*. This was suggested to me by Rammohun Roy's injunction to adopt the *Gayatri* for the purpose of worshipping Brahma. From this injunction the hope arose within me — “ओंकारं पुर्विकालिखीमहाव्याहृतयोऽव्यया त्रिपदाचैव सावित्री विद्येयं ब्रह्मणो मुखं ॥ योऽचीतेऽह्न्यह्न्ये तान् त्रीणि वर्षाण्यतन्द्रित स ब्रह्म परमभ्येति” The three *vyâhritis*, i. e., *bhurbhuvâ svahâ* preceded by the word *Om*, and the tripartite *Gayatri*, these three are the doors leading to the attainment of Brahma. He who recites the *Gayatri-mantra* together with the *Om* and *vyâhritis* for three years with untiring perseverance, he attains to Brahma. In that form of declaration it was also laid down that we should say our prayers in the morning, fasting.

We fixed upon the 7th of Pausa 1765, as the day for initiation into the Brâhma Dharma. I screened off the small private room of

the Samaj in which the Vedas used to be recited, and gave orders that no outsiders were to be admitted. A *vedi* was set up there, on which Vidyavagish took his seat, and we all sat around. A strange enthusiasm was awakened in our breasts. To-day the seed of Brahma Dharma would be sown in the heart of each of us,—and we hoped that in the fullness of time it would sprout up and become a tree everlasting. And when it bore fruit, of a surety we would obtain *amrita*¹ therefrom. “With the ripening of that fruit *amrita* will surely come.” Filled with this hope and zeal I stood up before Vidyavagish in all humility and spoke thus: “We have come to you to-day at this auspicious moment, to this sacred temple of the Brahma Samaj, in order to take the vow of initiation into the holy Brahma Dharma. Make us all eager for the path of salvation, and by your precepts so exhort us that we may renounce the worship of finite gods and pray to the one Parabrahma without a second, that we may feel prompted to do good, and not be entangled in the meshes of sin.”

On hearing this exhortation of mine, and seeing my singleness of purpose, he shed tears, and said: “Such was the aim of Rammohan Roy, but he was not able to realise it. After all this time now his desire has been fulfilled.” First Sridhar Bhattacharya got up, and reading out the vows in front of the *vedi*, embraced the Brahma religion. Then came Shyamacharan Bhattacharya, then myself. Then one by one,—Brajendranath Tagore, Girindranath Tagore, Anandachandra Bhattacharyá, Taraknath Bhattacharya, Haradev Chattopadhyaya, Akshoy Kumar Datta, Harishchandra Nandi, Lala Hazarilal, Shyamacharan Mukhopadhyaya, Bhawanicharan Sen, Chandranath Roy, Ramnarayan Chattopadhyaya, Sashibhushan Mukhopadhyaya, Jagatchandra Roy, Loknath Roy and others, twenty one in all, embraced the Brahma faith. The day the Tatwabodhini Sabha was founded was a memorable day, the day of initiation into the Brahma Dharma was another day of days. Since the year 1761 we had gradually advanced so far that to-day, taking refuge in Brahma we had entered into the Brahma religion, with it into new life. Our enthusiasm and delight knew no bounds. This was an unprecedented event in the annals of

¹ Nectar of Immortality.



Pulta Gardens

the Brâhma Samâj Formerly there had existed the Brâhma Samâj only, now Brâhma Dharma came into existence There can be no religion without Brahma, nor can Brahma be obtained without religion. Religion and Brahma are inseparably connected. Having realised this close connection, we embraced the Brahma religion, and thereby became Brâhmas, thus justifying the existence of the Brâhma Samâj. Within the month of Pausha, 1767, five hundred persons took the vows and were enrolled as Brâhmas In those days there was a wonderful brotherly feeling between one Brâhma and another, such as is rarely met with even amongst brothers. I was overjoyed to see such mutual affection on the part of the Brâhmas I thought to myself it would be a good thing if one could organize a *mela* for them every *Pausha*, in some open place outside the town There all might improve themselves by meeting and promoting the growth of friendly intercourse, and interchanging ideas on the subject of religion With this object in view I invited them all to my gardenhouse at Goriti, opposite Palta, on the 7th of Pausha, 1767 I engaged eight or nine boats and took over all the Brâhmas to this garden from Calcutta This was the occasion of a great Brâhma festival, where their goodwill, affection and enthusiasm had full play. In the early morning, with the rising of the sun, we raised a pæan of praise to Brahma, and sitting in the shade of a tree adorned with fruit and flowers, we delighted and sanctified ourselves by worshipping God with all our heart At the conclusion of the service Rakhaldas Halder proposed that, 'it is fit and proper that Brâhmas should discard the sacred thread As we have all become worshippers of the one and only God, it is better not to have any caste-distinctions, The Sikh community, worshippers of *Alakh Niranjan*, having all become one nation by giving up caste and adopting the surname of "Singh" obtained such strength of unity, that defeating such a dauntless Badshah of Delhi as Aurangzebe himself, they founded an independent kingdom" When Rakhaldas Halder's father heard of his son's proposal to renounce the sacred thread, he immediately tried to stab himself in the heart with a knife

CHAPTER X.

I had thought at first that the Brâhmas would worship Brahma by means of the Gayatri-mantra alone, as enjoined by Rammohan Roy, but I had to give up that idea. I came to see that this *mantra* was too difficult for the majority of people to grasp. They do not find it congenial to use it as an instrument of prayer. To worship God by mastering the Gayatri-mantra together with its meaning was a task requiring strenuous endeavour. "Victory—or death," without such a resolute frame of mind success in this *mantra* is not obtainable. But men of such strong determination and staunch faith are rare indeed. "सहस्रेषु कश्चिदेव भवति" Perhaps there may be one in a thousand. But what I wanted was that the worship of Brahma should obtain generally, among all classes of people. So I decided that those who could worship Brahma by means of the Gayatri were welcome to do so, those who were incapable of this were free to adopt any easier method of communion with God. Therefore in the form of declaration, for the words "I will daily worship Parabrahma by ten times repeating the Gayatri with love and reverence" were substituted "I shall daily devote my soul to Parabrahma with love and reverence." But for the communion of the soul with God words are a potent medium. And if those words are time honoured and well-known, and easy of utterance and comprehension, the worshipper benefits by them all the sooner. Therefore I was overjoyed to find in the Upanishads, after much searching, these two noble expressions, answering to the above qualities and suited to the worship of Brahma, "सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म" "आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति" These words have fulfilled my wishes and crowned my efforts with success. Because now I find that all Brâhmas worship Brahma by reverently uttering "सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति"।

These two expressions were sufficient for each Brahma to devote his soul to Brahma, alone and in private. But for the purpose of worshipping Brahma in the Brâhma Samâj, a more comprehensive form of worship was required. With this object in view, after having

Introduced these two texts, I added to them three more *slokas* from the Upanishads. The first was, “सर्वमाकुक्षमकायमब्रह्ममहावि-
श्वसुपापविहं, कविर्मानासो परिभूः स्वयम्भूयांघातय्यतीधान् व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः
समास्य ।”

“He is all-pervading, spotless, formless, without veins and scars, pure and undefiled, without sin, He is all seeing, and the ruler of our minds; He is the most high and self-revealed, He bestows upon His creatures at all times all things that are needful.” In order to realise and understand at the time of worship that this all-pervading, all seeing, formless Deity has created the universe, the following *sloka* was added “एतस्माज्जायते प्राणोमनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च खं वायुर्जोतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्यधारिणी” He is the source of life, mind, and all the senses, of the sky, atmosphere, light, water and that which contains them all—this earth. He is the sustainer of all things, and the universe to this day is moving under his control, in order to dwell upon this idea this third *sloka* was afterwards inserted—“भयादस्माद्विस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः भयादिन्द्रियं वायुश्च स्रज्ज्वांयति पञ्चनः” At his command the fire burns bright, at his command the sun gives light, at his command the clouds and winds speed on, and death itself roams abroad

The following *slokas* were extracted, in a revised form, from the Tantras, so as to formulate a hymn of praise to the Supreme Being, the saviour and supporter of this universe

“सो नमस्ते सते ते जगत् कारणाय नमस्ते चित्ते सर्वस्वीकाशयाय ।

नमोऽहैतत्तत्त्वाय मुक्तिप्रदाय नमो ब्रह्मणे व्यापिने शाश्वताय ॥

त्वमेकं शरणं त्वमेकं बरेण्यं त्वमेकं जगत् पालकं स्वप्रकाशम् ।

त्वमेकं जगत् कर्तृ, पाट प्रहसं त्वमेकं परं निश्चलं निर्विकल्पं ॥

भयानां भयं भीषणं भीषणानां गतिं प्राणिनां पावनं पावनानां ।

महोच्चैः पदानां नियन्तु त्वमेकं परेषां परं रक्षणं रक्षणानां ॥

वयन्त्वा अरासो वयन्त्वा अजामी वयन्त्वा जगत् साक्षिरूपं नमान् ।

सदेक निधानं निराक्षन्मोक्षं भवाभीषिपोतं शरणं ब्रह्मणम् ॥”

O Thou Spirit of Truth and First Cause of this universe, thou Essence of wisdom and the support of all that is, we salute thee. Thou art our saviour and only God, the One without a second, eternal

and allpervading Brahma, we salute thee. Thou alone art the refuge of all things, Thou alone art worthy of homage, Thou alone art the protector of this universe, and self-revealed ; Thou alone art the creator preserver, and destroyer of the universe, Thou alone art the most high, fixed and unfaltering of purpose Thou alone art the terror of all terrors, and terrific amongst those that terrify ; Thou alone art the goal of all creatures and the purest of the pure , Thou alone art the ruler of the mighty, higher than the highest, and defender of those that protect Thee we meditate upon, Thee we worship, thou art the witness of this universe, before thee we prostrate ourselves O thou One and only Spirit of Truth, Thou upholder of the universe, Lord of all, wholly self-reliant, Thou ship amidst the ocean of this life, we cling to Thee alone as our only refuge

Shyamacharan Tatwagish was born in a Tantrik family. His father Kamalakanta Chudamani had been a zealous Tantrik, so that Tatwagish was well versed in Tantrik literature Having added to our form of Brahma worship the three *slokas* " Saparyagâ " etc from the Upanishads, I began to search the Vedas for an inspiring Brahma stotra to be inserted after them, but could find none to my liking, at which I was sorely perplexed and disturbed When he came to know the cause of my anxiety, Tatwagish said that there was a beautiful *Brahma stotra* in the *Tantra shashtra*. On my asking him what it was, he read it out from the Mahanirvanatantra. I was delighted with it But as it was tinged with Advaita doctrines I was unable to accept it in its entirety. Therefore I altered it so as to make it conform to the Brahmadharmas. This *stotra* is divided into five parts (rainas), the first two lines of the first verse ran thus, "नमस्ते सते सर्वलोकाश्रयाय । नमस्ते चिते विश्वरूपमाश्रयाय" I changed this into, नमस्ते सते ते जगत् कारणाय । नमस्ते चिते सर्वलोकाश्रयाय' In the third and fourth lines, for "नमोऽद्वैतवत्ताय मुक्तिप्रदाय । नमो ब्रह्मणे व्यापिने निर्गुणाय" I substituted "नमोऽद्वैतवत्ताय मुक्तिप्रदाय । नमो ब्रह्मणे व्यापिने आश्रयाय" In the second line of the second verse occur the words "त्वमेकं जगत्कारण विश्वरूपं" in place of which I put "त्वमेकं जगत्पालकं सुप्रकाश ।" In the fourth line of the third verse, for "रचकं रचकानां" I substituted "रक्षणं रक्षणानां" The fourth verse I entirely omitted

The first line of the fifth verse “त्वदेकं अरामस्तदेकं जगामः” I altered thus “वयन्त्वा अरामो वयन्त्वास्तजामः” In the next line, for the word “त्वदेकं” I substituted “वयन्त्वत्” After making these corrections, I read it over, and found that it was very beautiful. According to the Brâhma-dharma, God is the creator, not the substance, of the universe. Therefore in the first line I said, He is the spirit of truth and first cause of the universe, and in the second line I said, He is the essence of wisdom, and the support of all that is. After this came नमोऽस्तुते तवत्वाच्च सुक्तिप्रदाय, नमो ब्रह्मणे व्यापिने जगत्पताय, He who is the creator and supporter of the universe, He is our saviour, He is Brahma, omnipresent, beyond the reach of time, eternal. In modifying this Tantrik *stotra*, and translating it into Bengali, I received signal help from Tatwagish for which I am still thankful to him.

I then composed a prayer, which was placed at the very end of our form of worship. “O Supreme Spirit, deliver us from sin committed through delusion and guard us from evil desires, that we may strive to walk in thy appointed path of righteousness, and inspire us to meditate constantly and lovingly upon thy immeasurable glory and supreme goodness, so that in the fulness of time our desires may be crowned by heavenly bliss through everlasting communion with thee.” This form of worship was introduced into the Brâhma Samâj in 1767. But at that time the reading of the *stotra* was not followed by the Bengali translation which began to be recited after the year 1770. Before this form of worship was instituted in the Brâhma Samâj, they used to have only the recital of the Vedas, the reading of *slokas* from the Upanishads together with their commentaries, sermons by Ramchandra Vidyavagish, and the singing of hymns.

CHAPTER XI.

My mind and heart were fully satisfied by finding presented in a more vivid manner in the Upanishads the truths at which I had arrived beforehand through my own poor understanding by the grace of God. I found in the Upanishads that He is the true, the wise, the eternal Brahma. At one time the unrestrained power of Nature used to inspire me with extreme terror. Now I clearly perceived that there was a ruler over nature, "समावानधितिह्वेकः" that one true Being holds the reins of nature. One lash of his makes the world go round "भयादस्याग्रिस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः." He is the king of kings, the Maharaja, he is our father, mother and friend,—knowing this I cast off all fear, and fulfilled the desire of my heart by His worship. Alone, in solitude, I feel His sublime and glorious might. In the Brâhma Samâj I sing His praises with my brethren, with my friends I call on him who is the friend of us all. All my wishes were by this completely realised. As long as I had failed to approach Him, I used to think that everyone on this earth was favoured by fortune and I alone was most unfortunate, there were so many people hurrying towards God—so many to the temple of *Visweswara*, so many to the shrine of Jagannath, so many to Dwarka and Haridwar—people without number. Everywhere the temples were filled with the presence of gods, overflowing with the rapture of devotion, ringing with the holy sounds of worship,—but to me it was all empty. To see the God whom I could adore and stand in His presence, to worship Him with the offering of my heart's devotion, to sing of His glory—this had been the ardent longing that consumed me with bitter pain, like unto the pangs of thirst when no water is nigh;—now that yearning was satisfied, and all my sorrow departed. After all this time I realised this mercy of the all-merciful that He never forsakes His devoted worshipper. He who seeketh Him shall find Him. That I should be a poor, miserable and unfortunate wanderer upon the face of this earth was more than He could bear to see. He revealed Himself to me. I saw "अयमस्मिन्नाकाशे तेजोमयीऽमृतमयः पुरुषः सर्वानुभूः" This omniscient, radiant and immortal Being

pervaded all space. In the temple of the universe I saw the Lord of the universe Nobody can place Him anywhere, nobody can make Him with the hand, He exists for ever in His own self I had found the God of my adoration, sanctified myself by worshipping Him alone and in the company of others The hope which I had in my heart when I approached His presence, was now fulfilled to the utmost I was satisfied in that I had received so much, but He was not satisfied with giving so little He wants to give more—like unto a mother He wants to give still more What I had never known, what I had never asked for, even that He wants to give. Although I perceived that the Gayatri was not suitable for the popular worship of Brahma, still I held on to that goddess Savitri and never left her For generations we have been initiated in this Gayatri *mantra* It runs in our blood I had forgotten this *mantra*, although I had been initiated in it at the time of my *upanayana* ceremony As soon as I saw the efficacy of the Gayatri for Brahma worship, as taught by Ram Mohun Roy, it sank deep into my soul With constant repetition of its meaning I meditated on it to the best of my power When I first reduced the Brahmic declaration of faith to writing, I also inculcated in it the worship of Brahma by means of the Gayatri mantra Though I did not succeed in benefiting others by the promulgation of the Gayatri mantra, yet in my own case it was productive of much good I continued to worship Him daily by means of the Gayatri, before touching any food, with mind alert and collected so as to completely fulfil the injunctions of the Brahma Dharma. The deep significance of the Gayatri began to be disclosed to my mind day by day Gradually the spirit of ‘विद्यायोनः प्रबोद्धात्’ permeated my whole heart By this I was firmly convinced that God was not merely a silent witness with regard to myself He was an indwelling Spirit, who ever inspired my thoughts and volitions. In this way a deep and living connection was established with Him Formerly I had deemed it privilege enough to salute Him from a distance, now I obtained this thing beyond all hope that He was not far from me, not only a silent witness, but that He dwelt within my soul and inspired all my thoughts Then I knew that I

was not helpless, He is my stay everlasting. When not knowing Him, I was wandering sad and despondent, even then, dwelling within me, He gradually opened my inner eye, the eye of wisdom. All this time I did not know that he was leading me by the hand, now I consciously walked under His guidance. From now I began to train myself to listen for His command, to understand the difference between my own inclination and His will. What seemed to me to be the insidious promptings of my own desires I was careful to avoid, and what appeared to my conscience to be His command, that I tried to follow. Then I prayed to Him to inspire me with righteousness, to guard me with moral strength, to give me patience, courage, fortitude and contentment. What profit beyond all expectation had I not gained by adopting the Gayatri-mantra. I had seen Him face to face, had heard His voice of command and had become His constant companion. I could make out that he was guiding me, seated within my heart. Even as He, dwelling in the sky, guides the stars and planets, so does He, dwelling within my heart, inspire all my righteous feelings and guide my soul. Whenever, in solitude and in the dark, I acted against His wish, I at once felt His chastening influence, at once I saw His terrible face “महद्वय बभूवुः” dread as an uplifted thunderbolt, and the blood froze in my veins. Again, whenever I performed some good action in secret, he openly rewarded me, I saw his benign countenance, all my heart was purified with the waters of holiness. I felt that, ever enshrined within my heart, He taught me wisdom like a *guru*, and prompted me to do good deeds, so that I exclaimed, “Thou art Father too and Mother, Thou art the *Guru* and bestower of all wisdom.” In punishment as in reward, I discerned his love alone. Nurtured by his love, falling to rise again, I had come thus far. I was then twenty-eight years of age

CHAPTER XII.

Formerly when I used to see people worshipping factitious and finite gods in their petty shrines I thought to myself: when shall I see my own Infinite God face to face in the temple of this universe and adore Him. This desire was then burning in my heart night and day. Waking or asleep, this was my one wish, my only thought. Now having seen in the heavens this radiant and immortal Being, all my desires were fulfilled, and all my torment was at an end.

I was satisfied with getting so much, but He was not content with giving so little. Hitherto He had existed beyond and outside myself, now He revealed Himself within me, I saw Him within my soul, The lord of the world-temple became the lord of my heart's shrine, and from thence I began to hear silent and solemn religious teachings. Fortune favoured me beyond all my expectations. I received more than I had ever hoped for, and scaled mountains, cripple though I was. I had not known how boundless was his mercy. The craving I had felt when seeking for Him increased a hundred-fold now that I had found Him. The little that I now see of Him, the little of His voice that I can hear, is not enough to assuage my hunger and thirst. "The more you feed, the greater the greed." O my Lord! now that I have seen Thee, reveal Thyself to me more vividly. I have been blest by hearing the sound of Thy voice, pour out its sweet strains more and more honeyed. Let Thy beauty appear before me under everchanging forms. Now Thou appearest to me and disappearest like a flash of lightning, I cannot retain my hold on Thee. Do Thou dwell for ever in my heart. Whilst saying these words the light of His love found its way into my heart like the rays of the morning sun. Without Him I had been as one dead, with a void in my heart, plunged in the darkness of despondency. Now, at the rising of the sun of love, life was infused into my heart, I was awakened from my deep slumber, the gloom of sadness was dispelled. Having found God the current of my life flowed on swiftly, I gained fresh strength. The tide of my good fortune set in. I became a pilgrim on the path of love. I came to know now that He was the life of my life, the Friend of my heart, that I could not pass a single moment without Him.

CHAPTER XIII

One morning, in the month of Bysakh 1267, I was reading the papers, when the *speaker* of our House, Rajendranath Sircar came to me with tears in his eyes. He said ' Last Sunday my wife and the wife of my youngest brother Umeschandra were going to a party in a carriage, when Umeschandra came and took his wife out of the carriage by force, and they both went off to Dr Duff's house to become Christians. My father, after much fruitless effort to bring them back from there, filed a complaint in the Supreme Court. That complaint was dismissed. But I went to Dr Duff and, telling him that we would again file a complaint, entreated him not to baptise my brother and sister in law until the second judgment was given. But he has been deaf to my entreaties and has baptised them last evening.' And Rajendranath fell to weeping. At this I felt greatly indignant and distressed. They were making Christians even of our Zenana ladies! Wait a bit, I am going to put a stop to this. So saying I rose. I immediately set Babu Akshoy Kumar Dutt's pen in motion, and a spirited article appeared in the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*—"Even the ladies of our Zenana are falling away from their own religion and adopting that of others. Are we not to be roused even by the direct evidence of such dreadful calamities! How much longer are we going to remain overpowered by the sleep of inaction! Behold, our religion is being altogether destroyed, our country is on the road to ruin, and our very Hindu name is about to be wiped out for ever * * * * * Therefore, if you desire your own welfare and that of your family, if you hope for the advancement of our country and have regard for truth then keep your boys aloof from all contact with missionaries. Give up sending your sons to their schools, and take immediate steps to enable them to cultivate their minds with due vigour. Perhaps you will say, where else can the children of the poor receive education except in mission schools? But is not this a crying shame? In order to spread their own religion, the Christians have set at naught the waves of the deep sea, and entering India are founding schools in every town and every village, whereas we have not got a single good school of our own where our children can be taught

If we all combine, could we not set up schools as good as theirs or ten times better? What object is there which cannot be achieved by unity?" Babu Akshoy Kumar Dutt's article was published in the *Patika* and after that I went in a *garry* every day from morning till evening to all the leading and distinguished men in Calcutta, and entreated them to adopt measures by which Hindu children would no longer have to attend missionary schools and might be educated in schools of our own. Raja Radhakanta Deb and Raja Satyacharan Ghosal on the one hand, on the other hand Ramgopal Ghose—I went to each and all of them, and incited them all. They were all fired by my enthusiasm. This did away with the rivalry between the *dharma sabha* and the *brahma-sabha*, and all their disagreement with each other. All were ranged on the same side, and tried their best to prevent children going to Christian schools and missionaries making Christian converts. A large meeting was convened on the 13th Jaishtha, at which nearly a thousand people assembled. It was resolved that, as missionaries had their free schools, so we also should have a school where children would be taught free of charge. We were waiting subscription-book in hand to see what each one would subscribe, when Ashutosh Deb and Pramathanath Deb took the book from us and put down ten thousand rupees against their names. Raja Satyacharan Ghosal subscribed three thousand, Brajanath Dhar two thousand, and Raja Radhakanta Deb one thousand. In this manner forty-thousand rupees were raised then and there. Then we knew that our labours were crowned with success. As a result of this meeting an educational institution called the *Hindu-hitarthi*¹ was founded, and Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur was appointed president to carry on its work. Harimohun Sen and I became the secretaries. Babu Bhudeb Mukhopadhyaya was the first teacher appointed in this free school. Thenceforward the tide of Christian conversion was stemmed,—and the designs of the missionaries were knocked on the head.

¹ The well wisher of Hindus

CHAPTER XIV.

When I found the knowledge of Brahma and a system of His worship in the Upanishads, and when I came to know that this was the *shastra* whose authority was recognized throughout the whole of India, I resolved to propagate the *Brâhma* religion by means of the Upanishads. All our theologians revere the Upanishads as the Vedanta, the crowning point and essence of all the Vedas. If I could preach the Brâhma religion as based upon the Vedanta, then all India would have one religion, all dissensions would come to an end, all would be united in a common brotherhood, her former valour and power would be revived and finally she would regain her freedom. Such were the lofty aspirations which my mind then entertained. Idolatry with all its pomp and circumstance was to be found chiefly in the Tantras¹ and Puranas, or and had no place in the Vedanta. If every one were to turn from the Tantras and Puranas to the Upanishads, if they sought to acquire the knowledge of Brahma as taught in the Upanishads, and devoted themselves to His worship, then it would result in the utmost good of India. To clear the path to that great good was my sole aim and object. But the Vedas, whose crowning point were the Upanishads, the Vedas whose doctrines and conclusions the Vedanta philosophy took such pains to arrive at, those Vedas were a sealed book to us. A few of the Upanishads had been published at the instance of Rammohun Roy, and I too had collected some that had not yet been printed. But we could learn nothing of the extensive Vedic literature. The Vedas had become virtually extinct in Bengal. *Nyaya* and *Smriti shastras*

¹ Tantras and Puranas.

The Puranas constitute an important department of Sanskrit literature and are, in fact, the Vedas of popular Hindustan. The term Purana signifies old traditional story and the eighteen ancient narratives to which this name is applied, are said to have been compiled by the ancient sage Vyasa, the compiler of the Vedas and the Mahâbhârata and the supposed founder of the Vedanta Philosophy.

Tantras represent a phase of Hinduism generally later than that of the Puranas, although some of the Puranas are said to teach Tantric doctrines by promoting the worship of Prakriti and Sakti, the active energizing principle of the Deity.



Sarada Devi

were studied in every *tal*,¹ and many *pundits* versed in these *shastras* came forth thence, but the Vedas were totally ignored. The business of Brahmins, that of learning and teaching the Vedas, had altogether disappeared from the country; there remained Brahmins only in name, bereft of all Vedic knowledge, bearing the sacred thread alone. With the exception of one or two learned Brahmin *pundits*, they did not even know the meaning of their daily prayers. I felt a keen desire to learn the Vedas thoroughly. Benares was the seat of Vedic culture, so I purposed sending students there to learn the Vedas. In the year 1766 I sent one student to Benares. He collected all the original Vedic manuscripts there and began to study them. In the following year three others were sent there. Ananda chandra, Taraknath, Baneshwar and Ramanath, these were the four students.

When I sent them to Benares my father was in England. The task of managing his various affairs devolved upon me. But I was not able to attend to any business matters properly. My subordinates used to do all the work. I was only concerned with the Vedas, the Vedanta, religion, God, and the ultimate goal of life. I was not even able to stay quietly in the house. My spirit of renunciation became deeper under all this stress of work. I felt no inclination to become the owner of all this wealth. To renounce every thing and wander about alone, this was the desire that reigned in my heart. Imbued with His love I would roam in such lonely places that none would know, I would see His glory on land and water, would witness His mercy in different climes, would feel His protective power in foreign countries, in danger and peril, in this enthusiastic frame of mind I could no longer stay at home.

In the month of *Sravan*, 1768, in the fulness of the rainy season I went up the Ganges in a boat. My good wife Sarada Devi came to me with tears in her eyes and said "Where would you go, leaving me behind? If you must indeed go, take me with you." So hiring a *pinna* for her, I took her with me. She installed herself in it

¹ Indigenous Sanskrit Schools.

with Dwijendranath, Satyendranath and Hemendranath,—while I occupied a large roomy boat of my own with Rajnarayan Bose. Dwijendranath was then seven, Satyendranath five, and Hemendranath three years old

Rajnarayan Bose's father's name was Nundokishore Bose. He was a favourite pupil of Rammohun Roy I was greatly delighted to become acquainted with a man of his piety and good nature. He adopted the Brâhma religion in 1766. "It would be a very good thing if Rajnarayan became a Brâhma" he always used to say. He did not live to see this desire of his fulfilled After his death Rajnarayan Babu came to see me in mourning. From that moment I took him for my friend He was one of the most distinguished English scholars of the time, and was well known as an educated man His learning, modesty and piety drew me towards him more and more day by day At last in 1767 he declared himself a Brâhma His religious views were in complete accord with mine In him I found an enthusiastic supporter. I specially entrusted him with all the English reading and writing necessary at that time for the spread of religion I used to expound to him the Katha and other Upanishads, he translated them into English, and those translations were published in the Tatwabodhini Patrika Although he was not then very well off, yet he was always cheerful, and we always saw a smile on his face. He was then my inseparable companion, I was very fond of having religious discussions with him

I used to look upon him as one of the family When I took this trip with my family, I had Rajnarayan Babu with me and he stayed in my boat My wife and sons were in the pinnace We started on our tour in high spirits The strong Sravan current was against us, we advanced slowly and with great difficulty. It took three or four days to reach Hughli. On arriving at Kalna two days later we thought we had come a long distance indeed. Going along in this manner, when we had left Patuli behind, one day at four o'clock I said to Rajnarayan Babu "Finish your diary for to-day. The beauty of nature is too glorious to lose, come, let us go and sit on deck." He said "It is quite early yet, who knows what events may happen in the meantime for my diary" Whilst talking to him thus I saw



Rajnarayan Bose P. 42.

a dark cloud gathering in the west, and feared a heavy storm. "Let us get into the pinnace" I said to Rajnarayan Babu, "it is not safe to stay in the boat during a storm." The boatman put the boat alongside the pinnace. I was sitting on the deck with my feet on the ladder, and two boatmen were holding the boat and pinnace together. Another boat was being towed along, and its tow-rope fouled the top of our mast. One of our men was trying to dislodge it with a long pole, and I was watching him. The man who was thus engaged could not bear the weight of the pole, and it was about to fall from his hands upon my head. Cries of "Take care! Take care!" arose on all sides, and there was a great hubbub. I was still looking up at the mast. The boatman, straining every nerve, just managed to miss my head, but could not keep clear altogether. The end of the pole struck the frame of my spectacles near the corner of my eye. My eye was saved, but the frame cut deep into my nose. I pulled off my spectacles, and the blood began to flow profusely. I then came down from deck and began to wash off the blood. The storm was forgotten, we were all rather off our guard. The boatmen were holding on to the pinnace, and in this manner the pinnace was sailing along with the boat. All of a sudden a gale sprang up and broke the mast of the pinnace. The broken mast with its sail and ropes got entangled with the mast of the boat and fell upon the deck where I had been sitting. Now it kept hanging over my head. The pinnace, with its remaining sails, rushed forward in the storm dragging the boat along with it. The two men who were holding on, could no longer keep it under control. The boat lurched to one side owing to the pull of the pinnace. That side was nearly level with the water, only about a finger's breadth above it. A hue and cry arose about cutting the rope entangled with the mast. A *dao*¹, a *dao*. But no *dao* was to be found. Someone climbed up the mast with a blunt *dao*. Blow after blow was struck, but the rope could not be cut with the blunt weapon. With the utmost difficulty one rope was cut through, and yet another. A third was being

¹ A heavy curved knife.

hacked at, Rajnarāyan Babu and myself were gazing at the water in silence. We are here one moment, and gone the next, life and death go hand-in-hand. Rajnarāyan Babu's eyes were fixed, his voice hushed, his body rigid. The boatmen were, still cutting the rope. Again a severe gust of wind arose. "Here it is again" exclaimed the boatmen, while they snapped the rope. The boat, thus set free, shot like an arrow to the opposite bank, and stood alongside. I immediately jumped on land, and helped Rajnarāyan Babu to get out also. We were now safely landed, but the pinnace was still rushing on. "Stop, stop" cried the boatmen. It was then sunset, and the shades of evening together with the gloom of the clouds made it rather dark. I could not quite make out in the darkness whether the pinnace had stopped or not. From another side I saw a small boat advancing swiftly towards ours. It soon came up with us. "What is this again?" said I, "can it be a dacoit boat?" I felt alarmed. A man jumped on land from the boat. I saw it was our own Swarup *kṛhansama*. His face was sad and drawn. He gave me a letter. From what I could read of it with great effort in the dark, it appeared to contain news of my father's death. He said "all Calcutta is upset. Several people have set out in boats in search of you. Nobody has yet succeeded in coming up with you and all my trouble is now rewarded in having been able to find you." This news came upon me like a thunderbolt. Sadly and silently I rowed towards the pinnace in my boat, and reaching it, got on board, and read the letter clearly by lamplight. Nothing was to be done now. I did not then give anybody the news of his death. Early the next morning I turned back towards Calcutta. My boat was a 14 oared one. Boards were nailed to the inner benches on either side, and a broad *farash* spread over them. I took my wife and children in there, gave the whole pinnace up to Rajnarāyan Babu, and asked him to follow us leisurely. The boat rushed onwards swiftly like a falling star with the *Bhadra* current of the Ganges, propelled by sail and oar. But my mind rushed on ahead of it. The noise of wind and rain was ceaseless in the cloudy sky. Midway, shortly before reaching Kālāna, such a strong gale sprang up near an open field, that the boat came near to being capsized. It was then going

alongside the bank. The boatmen immediately jumped on land and tied the boat to the stump of a tree close by so that it was safe. That stump then seemed to me a veritable shelter in the wilderness, and a good and true friend. In five minutes my anxiety prompted me to set the boat free. When daylight was nearly gone I caught a glimpse of the pale sun from between the clouds. We had then reached Sukha Sagar. Sunset found us at Chandernagore. By this time the rowers' hands were benumbed. After the continuous incessant strain they could work no longer. Moreover high tide set in. This was a great hindrance. From here to Palta took us up to 8 o'clock in the evening. Here the boat began to have a list to one side. From ten in the morning till the evening it had been raining without a break. We had to stop the boat too once or twice for fear of sudden gusts of wind. The boatmen were wet through and shivering with cold. As soon as we reached Palta a man from the river side came and told us a carriage was ready, at which news my drooping spirits revived. I had been sitting in the boat ever since, without stirring or getting up even once—now on hearing about the carriage I came and stood outside the door of the boat. There I found myself knee-deep in water. The water had filled the hold of the boat and risen more than a foot above the flooring. It was all rain-water. I had not been aware of this before. Had there been no carriage waiting at Palta, had we gone on straight towards Calcutta in the boat, it would most certainly have gone down with the weight of the water, and I should not have lived to tell this tale. Descending from the boat we got into the carriage. The roads were full of water, in which the carriage-wheels were sunk up to the middle. With the utmost difficulty we reached home at midnight. Everyone was asleep, not a soul stirring. I sent my wife and children into the inner apartments, and myself went up to the third floor of the Boytakkhāra. There I was welcomed by my cousin Braja Babu. Seeing him thus waiting for me alone up to such a late hour gave me a sort of fright,—I know not why.

CHAPTER XV.

My father died in London, in Śrā in 1778. He was then 51 years of age. My youngest brother Nagendranath and my cousin Nabinchandra Mukherji were present at his deathbed. After his death the news reached me in Bhādra. On receipt of this news, I went with my second brother to the opposite bank of the Ganges on the 14th day of the dark half of the moon and performed his obsequies by burning an effigy made of *kusa* grass. Beginning from this day forward we went into the customary mourning for ten days, and partook of *hovishyānna*.¹ During this period of mourning, in consonance with social rules of courtesy, I used to get up early every morning and go about barefoot till midday visiting all the leading men of Calcutta, and after midday till evening I used to receive these gentlemen at my house. I religiously performed all the rigorous penances prescribed for a son in the event of his father's death. My youngest uncle Ramanath Tagore sounded a note of warning, saying "Look here, don't make a fuss now by harping upon Brahma. Dada's name is too well-known." When I went to see Raja Radhakanta Dev, he made me sit down by him, and made many kind enquiries about my father, and expressed sincere sorrow for his death. He was very fond of me, and advised me thus as a friend, "Perform this *S'raddha* ceremony properly, according to the rules laid down in the *S'astras*." I said to him with due deference, "I have taken the vow of Brahmaisism, and cannot do anything contrary to that vow. For if I did so I should commit a sin against religion. But the *S'raddha* I shall perform will be in accordance with the highest teachings of the Upanishads." He replied "No, no, that cannot be, then the *S'raddha* will not conform to the recognized rites. That would be going against social good form, listen to my advice, and all will go well." I said to my second brother Girindranath, "As we are Brāhmas now, we cannot perform the *S'raddha* by bringing in the *S'algram*. If we do that what is the good of having become Brāhmas and why should we

¹ Rice and ghee usually taken during the period mourning.

have taken vows ?” He answered softly with bent head, “Then everybody will forsake us, everyone will go against us, how can we get on in the world, our family will not prosper, and we shall find ourselves in great straits” “In spite of all that we cannot possibly countenance idolatry” I said I did not receive any encouragement from anybody in this matter Even my dear brother threw cold water on my enthusiasm Everybody was opposed to my views So strong was the opposition, it would appear that I was going to drag them all down to perdition They seemed to think that by one act of mine all would be saved or lost I was alone on one side, against everybody on the other. No one uttered a single word of hope, or encouragement. When I was thus surrounded on all sides by difficulties, helpless and friendless, only one staunch Brâhma came to my assistance and gave expression to my deepest sentiments “Fear the world ? What fear ? Fear Him alone, fearing whom one is fearless of all else What is the blame of men before religion ? Life itself can be sacrificed for religion We shall cling to the Brahma Dharma even at the risk of our lives” Who was this man ? It was Lalla Hazarilal In this crisis I came to learn that the Hindustanis of the North Western Provinces are superior to Bengalis in religious faith and courage He took my side and stood by me, at one with me in heart and soul When my grandfather had gone on a pilgrimage to Brindaban, he had found Hazarilal a helpless orphan there and brought him to our house He gave him a home with the best of intentions for his future welfare, but it turned out to be the contrary in this case. In coming to Calcutta he was carried away by the vicious current of town life There was nobody to look after him, nobody to make any enquiries, he fell into bad company, and led a depraved and dissolute life. In this evil plight he obtained by the grace of God a refuge in Brâhmaism The strength of Brâhma Dharma entered into his heart, and with its help he overcame his sinful tendencies and was restored to the path of a virtuous life. This same Hazarilal afterwards became a Brâhma missionary Having obtained release from the tortuous ways of sin by accepting the Brâhma faith, he tried to bring others also into the path of virtue. He began

to point out the way of the highest good which lies in the Brâhma religion to every person in Calcutta, rich and poor and wise and honoured. It was entirely owing to his efforts that so many people then became Brâhmas within such a short time. It was he who said to me in this trying time "Why fear men? Which is greater,—God or man?" His words filled me with courage and zeal. The fire of God burned brighter within my heart. I could not sleep well at night on account of all this discussion and depression. I had lost my father, then the whole day there was the worry and trouble of social duties, and over and above that there was this spiritual struggle going on within me. Which would triumph, the world or religion?—one could not tell—this was what worried me. My constant prayer to God was "Vouchsafe strength unto my weak heart, be Thou my refuge." All these anxieties and troubles would not let me sleep at night, my head felt dazed on the pillow. I would now doze off and again wake up. It was as if I was sleeping on the borderland between waking and sleeping. At such a time some one came to me in the dark and said "Get up," and I at once sat up. He said "Get out of bed" and I got up, he said "follow me" and I followed. He went down the steps leading out of the inner apartments, I did the same and came out into the courtyard with him. We stood before the front door. The *Durwans* were sleeping. My guide touched the door, and the two wings flew open at once. I went out with him into the street in front of the house. He seemed to be a shadow-like form. I could not see him clearly, but felt myself constrained to do immediately whatever he bade me. From thence he mounted up upwards to the sky, I also followed him. Clusters of stars and planets were shedding a bright lustre, right and left and in front of me, and I was passing through them. On the way I entered a sea of mist, where the stars and planets were no longer visible. After traversing the mist for some distance I came upon a still full moon, like a small island in that vaporous ocean. The nearer I came the larger grew that moon. It no longer appeared round, but flat like our earth. The apparition went and stood on that earth, and I did likewise. The

ground was all of white marble. Not a single blade of grass was there,—no flowers, no fruit. Only that bare white plain stretched all around. The moonlight there was not derived from the sun. It shone by virtue of its own light. The rays of the sun could not penetrate the surrounding mist. Its own light was very soft like the shade we have in the daytime. The air was pleasing to the senses. In the course of my journey across this plain I entered one of its cities. All the houses and all the streets were of white marble. Not a single soul was to be seen in the clean and bright and polished streets. No noise was to be heard. Everything was calm and peaceful. My guide entered a house by the road and went up to the second floor. I also went with him. I found myself in a spacious room, in which there were a table and some chairs of white marble. He told me to sit down, and I sat down in one of the chairs. The phantom then vanished. Nobody else was there. I sat silent in that silent room, shortly afterwards the curtain of one of the doors in front of the room was drawn aside and my mother appeared. Her hair was down, just as I had seen it on the day of her death. When she died I never thought that she was dead. Even when I came back from the burning ground after performing her funeral ceremonies I could not believe that she was dead. I felt sure that she was still alive. Now I saw that living mother of mine before me. She said, I wanted to see thee so I sent for thee. Hast thou really become a *brahmagnani*?¹ ² *Kulam paritram janani kutaatha*. On seeing her, and hearing these sweet words of hers my slumber gave way before a flood of joy. I found myself still tossing on my bed.

The *saddha* day came round. In front of our house a long shed was erected on the western courtyard, and adorned with the gold and silver offerings to be made at the *dan-sagar*.³ Gradually

¹ One who has known Brahman.

² Sanctified is the family, fulfilled is the mother's desire.

³ Funeral gifts on a grand scale.

the quadrangle became filled with friends and relatives by blood or marriage. I chose a *mantra* free from all association of idolatry and instructed Shyamacharan Bhattacharya beforehand to make me repeat that *mantra* at the time of the *danotsarga*¹ On the other hand priests and relatives had deposited the *salgram* etc in the middle of the shed and were awaiting my arrival. On all sides there was noise and confusion and the press of people. Meanwhile I took Shyamacharan Bhattacharya to one end of the *śraddha* shed and began to offer the gifts with the *mantra* previously fixed upon Two or three offerings had already been made in this manner when my cousin Madan Babu noticed us and exclaimed "What are you all doing here ? The offerings are being made over yonder There is no *shalgram* there, no priests, nothing at all " Elsewhere another uproar arose, everybody began to say, "They won't let those *kirtan* singers come in " Nilratan Haldar said " *Aha* ! the *karta* was very fond of hearing *kirtan*." My youngest uncle Ramanath Tagore asked me "Why did you forbid the *kirtan* singers to come ?" I said I knew nothing about it and had not forbidden them He said "There, look, Hazarilal won't allow the *kirtan* singers to enter the house " I hastily offered the sixteen items and other gifts and went up to my rooms in the third storey. After that I saw nobody, I was told that Gīrindranath was performing the *śraddha*. When all this confusion had subsided after midday, I went with Shyamacharan Bhattacharya and a few Brāhmas to my marble-floored room down below and read the *kāthopanishat*, whereas it is written in the *kāthopanishat* that whosoever shall read this *upanishat* at the time of *śraddha* shall thereby reap fruit everlasting. Nothing further transpired that day. Friends, relations and distant connections, everyone that had come from far and near partook of the feast and went their ways. Next day no relatives came to the appointed feast They all deserted me. My uncle, my first cousins and my four aunts remained on my side. Each of them lived in separate houses, so that the others were not able

¹ Offering of gifts by reciting mantras.

to ostracise me and I could not be boycotted. I said to Girindranath "What have you gained by performing the *sraddha* ? Nobody has recognized it as valid, yet you have broken your pledge. Those whom you sought to please by acting against your religion nevertheless did not partake of the caste dinner " Prasanna Kumar Tagore sent me word to say, "If Devendra never does so again we shall all accept his invitation." I replied "If that could be, then why should I have made all this fuss ? I can never again join hands with idolatry." This was the first instance of a *sraddha* being-performed without idolatry in accordance with the rites of Brahma dharma. Friends and relatives forsook me, but God drew me nearer to Himself. I gained satisfaction of spirit at the triumph of religion And that was all I wanted.

CHAPTER XVI.

My father's first visit to Europe was in the month of Pausa, 1763. He then owned large zemindaries situated in the districts of Hughli, Pabna, Rajshahi, Cuttack, Midnapur, Rungpur, Tipperah, etc., and carried on an extensive business in Indigo factories, saltpetre, sugar and tea. In addition to all these, coal mines were being worked in Ranigunj. Our worldly prosperity was then at its zenith. His keen intelligence made it clear to him that should the management of these extensive affairs devolve upon us in the future, we would not be able to cope with them. If the commercial concerns failed through us, our large self-acquired Zemindaries would also be lost with them, and our ancestral estates Berahimpur and Cuttack would meet with a like fate. That owing to loss in his business transactions we should be deprived of the property of our forefathers also,—this was the anxiety that preyed upon his mind. I therefore in 1762, before going to Europe, he drew up a trust-deed, and joining to our ancestral Zemindaries of Berahimpur and Cuttack his self acquired property Dihl Shahazadpur and Paigana Kaligiam, he made over these four estates into the hands of three trustees. All the property was vested in them, we being the beneficiaries thereof. This act of his testified to his love for us, as well as to his keen foresight. Six months after his return from his first visit to Europe, he made a will, in the month of Bhadra, 1765, dividing all his property equally amongst us three brothers. The family ancestral house was allotted to me, the three-storeyed *Buthakkhana* house to my second brother Girindranath, and the entire open space to the west of our family dwelling-house to my youngest brother Nagendranath, together with a sum of Rs 20000 for building a house. My father had a half-share in our firm of Carr Tagore & Co., and the share-holders of the other half were certain Englishmen; I had a one-anna share in the concern. My father had bequeathed his half-share in this business to me alone, but I did not keep it only for myself, we three brothers divided it equally between us. Girindranath had a very good head for business. One day after he had become a partner in the firm, he made the following proposal to me "Since the entire capital in the

firm is ours, why should we share the profits with these English people? Why not take the whole business into our hands?" This idea did not commend itself to me. I said "This is not a sound proposal. The energy and strength of purpose with which the English are now working, knowing themselves to be partners, will not be brought to bear on our undertakings if they are deprived of their rights. We shall never be able to manage this extensive business alone, they are absolutely necessary for carrying on the work. As partners they certainly have a share in the profits, but in the event of loss they have to bear that as well. Whereas if instead of remaining partners they were to become paid servants, we should be obliged to pay their big salaries anyhow, whilst they would not take the same interest in the well-being of the firm as they are taking now. Therefore I do not approve of your proposal." "But," he argued, "the *Sahebs* have no separate property or assets of their own. Should our firm ever come to grief, then the creditors will fall on us alone—it is our property that will be seized, it will be for us to settle all accounts, and our estates will have to be sold in payment of all debts. They share the profits now, but in time of loss they will have no loss to bear. They will go away after enjoying the profits, whilst we will go on counting our losses and sacrificing all we possess. Look at what is happening even now. All our *Zemindari* money is being poured into the firm,—the more money we give the hungrier it becomes, nothing can satisfy its ferocious craving. But the English partners do not contribute a single pice.' Upon hearing him speak thus I praised his talent for business and gave him entire control over the firm, thus also getting ample leisure myself for work in the Brâhma Samâj.

We three brothers now became the sole proprietors of the whole firm. We engaged the services of former English partners some on Rs. 1000 some on Rs. 2000 a month, according to their respective shares. They had to agree to this arrangement and each attend to his own business. This new system of work was introduced into the firm of Carr Tagore & Co., in accordance with Girindianath's proposal. My approbation encouraged him, so that he began to look after the affairs of the firm with interest to the best of his abilities.

CHAPTER XVII

We learnt from the teachings of the Upanishad that the *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, *Attharvaveda*, and *Siksha*, *Kalpa*, *Vyakarana*, *Nirukta*, *Chhanda*, all these were inferior branches of knowledge, while that knowledge alone was the highest by which *Parabrahma* could be known. With deep reverence we accepted this doctrine. It was in perfect accord with our own aim and object. With a view to proclaim this object to the general public, we began to publish the following vedic verse as a heading from the first number of the second series of the *Tatvabodhini Patrika*. *Aparâ rigvedo yajurvedah sâmavedo'tharva vedah' s'iksha kalpo vyakaranam niruktanccchandojyotishamiti. Atha Parâ yaya Tadaksharamadhigamyate.*" When we came to know from this that there were two kinds of knowledge in the Vedas, *Parâvidyâ* and *Aparâvidyâ*, we became anxious to search the Vedas in order to find out in detail what was the subject-matter of the inferior knowledge and what of the supreme knowledge. I myself prepared to go to Benares. Accompanied by Lalla Hazarilal, I set out for Benares in a *Palki dak*, in the month of *Ashwin*, 1769. We arrived there after a tedious and troublesome journey of 14 days. I took up my abode in the *Mânmandir* on the banks of the Ganges. The students I had sent were highly delighted to have me there with them. They related to me what progress they had made in their studies and gave me all the news of Benares. I said to them "I must hold a meeting here and invite all the leading Brahmans and shastris of Benares who are versed in the Vedas. I want to hear all the Vedas and to understand their meaning." 'Ramanath, you ask your *Rigveda Guru* to invite the *Rigved* Brahmans of Benares. Baneshwar, you ask your *Yajurveda Guru* to invite the *Yajurvedi* Brahmans

¹ There are six *Vedāṅgas*, or helps to aid the student in reading and understanding the Veda and applying it to sacrificial rites viz. 1. *s'ikshâ*, the science of pronunciation, 2. *Kalpa*, ceremonial directory, comprising rules relating to the Vedic ritual and sacrifices, which rules are called *Smṛta sūtra*; 3. *Vyākaraṇa*, grammar, 4. *Nirukta*, exposition of difficult Vedic words, 5. *Chhanda*s, metre, 6. *Jyotiṣa*, astronomy, including arithmetic and mathematics, especially in connection with astrology.

of Benares. Taraaknath, you ask your Samaveda *Guru* to invite the Samaveda Brahmins, Anandachandra, you ask your Atharvavedas *Guru* to invite the Atharvaveda Brahmins of Benares" Thus all the Brahmins were invited. A rumour was spread in the city that some pious disciple had come from Bengal, who wished to hear all the Vedas. The Panda of Vis'wes'war came to me, and begged me to accompany him to the temple of Vis'wes'war. I said "Here I am already in the temple of Vis'wes'war, where else need I go?" On the morning of the third day after my arrival at Benares, the spacious hall of the Mânmandir was filled with Brahmins. I seated them in four rows,—one for the Rigveda, two for the Yajurveda and one for the Atharaveda. There were only two Samaveda boys,—whom I seated by my side. They were quite young *Brahmacharis*, still wearing rings in their ears, which become their faces so well. Baneshwar carried the cup containing sandalwood paste, Taraknath carried the flower-garlands, Ramanath carried the wearing apparel and Ananda Chandra carried Rs. 500. As soon as Baneshwar put the sandalpaste mark on a Brahmin's forehead, Taraknath decorated him with a garland of flowers, after which Ramanath gave him a linen *Dhuti*, and lastly Ananda Chandra put Rs. 2 into his hand. Thus every Brahmin received a mark, a garland, a *dhuti* and money. The Brahmins were delighted with this homage and exclaimed "Lo, how full of piety is this *Yajman*! Nobody has ever done such a thing in Benares." "Sanctify me now by reciting the Vedas, I pray you," said I to them with due humility. The Rigveda Brahmins repeated "Agnîmîde Purohitam" all together in a loud voice with great fervour. Then the Yajurvedis began the Yajurveda. As soon as they commenced to recite "Ishetvâ urjetvâ" one of the Brahmins cried out "The *Yajman* has insulted me." I asked wherein lay the insult. He said "The Black Yaju is the older Yaju, no precedence has been given to it, it has not been recited first, we have been insulted." I said "You had better settle this matter between yourselves amicably." A quarrel then ensued between these two factions as to who should recite first. When I saw there was no chance of their quarrel coming to an end I proposed that both parties should recite at the same time. At this

they were pleased, and both sides began to recite loudly and confusedly, so that nothing could be made out. Then I said "Now that the honour of both has been satisfied, let one side stop, and the other begin," upon which, first the White Yajur, and then the Black Yajur was recited. It took a long time to recite the Yajur veda. The Sāmavedi boys were eager to chant the Sâma hymns. They became restless at the delay in the recital of the Yajurveda. As soon as it was over they looked at me, and I asked them to recite. Immediately, both of them commenced the Sâma chant 'Indra âjâhi' in a sweet tone of voice. Such sweet chanting of the Sâma I had never heard before. Last of all the Atharvavedis recited and the assembly broke up. After the meeting was over the Brahmans were kind enough to say to me 'May it please the *Pajman* to give a feast to the Brahmans. We shall all eat together in a garden. Before I could say anything in reply Taraknath whispered in my ear to me, "A feast to these Brahmans, indeed! We shall have to provide everything, and they will each mark out a square in a plot of ground, and have separate meals. What is that to us? It is not as if it was like our own Brahman feasts, where we cook for them all and they all eat." Another Brahman came and said to me, "We shall soon celebrate a sacrifice (*Yajna*) here, if you care to come and see it." I said it was for this that I had come here. He said, "Animals are not killed in our sacrifice. We perform the *Yajna* by making animals of flour paste." From another side some Brahmans cried out, 'What kind of *Yajna* is that in which animals are not killed? It says in the Vedas 's'vetam âlabheta,' white goats must be sacrificed. I found that even in the matter of sacrifice there were different factions. However the Brahmans went away pleased. A holy Brahman of the place came at noon, bringing with him rice and vegetables for my midday meal. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the learned *shastris* of Benares again came to the *Mânmandir* for discussion of the *shastras*. The *gnankânda* and *karmakânda* of the Vedas and other *shastras* were argued upon in this assembly. In the course of conversation I asked them, "Is the killing of animals at sacrifices sanctioned in the Vedas?" They answered, without killing animals no *yajna* (sacrifice) can ever be

performed. Whilst I was thus discussing the *shastras* with these *pundits*, a *babu* from the Benares *rajah's* palace (by *babu* must be understood the brother of the *rajah*) came to me and said,—“The Maharaja wishes to see you.” I accepted this invitation of his. The meeting was then dissolved and the *shastris* went home after receiving parting gifts of money. One of them said, “We have accepted your gifts with great satisfaction. The accepting of gifts from a *S'udra* in Benares makes one's hair stand on end.” The next day that *babu* came and took me with him to Ramnagar on the opposite bank. The *Rajah* was then not at home. The *Babu* began to show me all the treasures of the *Rajah*. The rooms were as crowded as a shop with pictures, mirrors, chandeliers, carpets and hangings, tables and chairs. Whilst I was having a look round, I saw before me two *bandis* singing the *rajah's* praises, in a very sweet voice. By this I knew he had arrived. As soon as he came in he welcomed me warmly and took me to his audience hall. Singing and dancing immediately began there. He presented me with a diamond ring, which I accepted with due deference, and took my leave of him. He said, “It has given me great pleasure to meet you. You must be sure to come to the *Ramlila* on the tenth day of the moon.” I made my bow to him and returned to Benares at sunset. I went to Ramnagar again on the *Ramlila* day, and found the *rajah* smoking the *hookah* seated on a big elephant. Behind him on a small elephant was his *hookah*-bearer holding a *hookah* set with diamonds. On another elephant sat the *Rajaguru* (religious preceptor of the *rajah*) dressed in the ascetic's brick coloured robe, and silent. He had his tongue encased in wood, lest he should speak. Even in this he could not rely upon himself. Colonels, generals and commanding officers surrounded the *rajah* on all sides, each on his own elephant. I also got an elephant to ride on, and we all started for the scene of the *Ramlila*. On arriving at the *melā* we found crowds and crowds of people, just like another Benares. In one place a throne-like erection had been made, which was decorated all over with flowers, and above this was a canopy. On this throne was seated a boy, bow and arrow in hand. The people kept going up to him and

bowing down at his feet. On this occasion it was he that was *Ramachandra*, king of *Ayodhya*. A little further on was the battlefield. On one side were some figures representing *rakshasas*, with the heads of camels, horses or goats. They were standing in rows and consulting with each other, the horse's face next to the cow's ear, the camel's face next to the goat's ear, and so on, they were whispering to one another. A great council of war was apparently being held. After a time a bomb fell in their midst, and fireworks began on all sides. I left the place quietly. Then from Benares I went by boat as far as Mirzapur, seeing the Vindhya ranges on the way. Words cannot express the joy and the enthusiasm I felt on seeing even those small Vindhya hills. I wandered about from early morning till midday, and burning with hunger and thirst returned to the boat where I drank a little milk and felt revived. In the *Vindhyāchal* I saw both the *Yogamāya* and *Bhogmāyā*. The *Yogamāya* was ten-handed and carved in stone. Not a single pilgrim, not a soul was to be seen there. On going to the temple of *Bhogmāya* I found it as crowded as *Kalighat*, *Hindustanis* wearing red turbans and marks of red sandal on the forehead and garlands of *lava* flowers were sacrificing goats with much splashing of blood. This appeared to me to be a strange thing. I could not elbow my way to the temple through that crowd so I saw what I could from some distance. I then returned home by steamer from Mirzapur. I first came as far as Kumarkhali, taking *Ananda Chandra* with me on the way from Benares. After inspecting my *Zemindary* there I came back home to Calcutta. The other students followed shortly after and devoted themselves to the work of the *Samāj*. *Lala Hazarilal* set forth from Benares with nothing in his pocket, to preach in distant lands. All that he possessed was a single ring, on which was engraved in Hindi: *yeh bhi nahī rahēga* "Even this will not remain." Thus he departed, never to return, and I did not see him again.

CHAPTER XVIII

I was now thoroughly convinced that the subject-matter of the inferior knowledge in the Vedas was the various sacrifices in honour of the gods. The *hota* of the R̥gveda praises the gods, the *adhvaryu* of the Yajurveda offers *ghee* to the gods, and the *udgata* of the Samaveda sings the glory of the gods at the time of sacrifice. In the Vedas there are in all thirty-three gods, chief amongst whom are *Agni*, *Indra*, *Marut*, *Surya* and *Usha*. *Agni* is present in all the Vedic rites, without him no Vedic *yajna* can be performed. The god *Agni* is not only to be worshipped at the sacrifice, he is also the priest of the sacrifice. As the priest of the Rajah does his bidding, so does *Agni* himself, acting as priest of the sacrifice, perform the *homa*. It is *Agni* that distributes amongst the gods the *ghee* that is given to them in their respective names. Therefore he is not only the priest, he is also the messenger of the gods. And like a treasurer, *Agni* distributes amongst the worshippers the fruit gained by each through his oblation to each god. The god *Agni's* duties are manifold, and in the Veda he reigns supreme. Again, you will observe that without him none of our domestic rites can be performed. From the birth-ceremony up to the funeral and *Śraddha* ceremonies, on all occasions there must be *Agni*. He is the witness of marriage. The *Sudra* has no right to the Vedas, yet he must have *Agni* as a witness to marriage, to whom he has to offer *ghee* without repeating any *mantras*. I did not know before that the god *Agni* held such supremacy amongst us. From my childhood I had seen that nothing could be done without the *shalgram*. In marriage and other ceremonies, at all *poojals* and religious festivals, you must have the *shalgram*, it is our household god. Having seen the *shalgram* everywhere, I had thought it alone reigned supreme. And having given up the *shalgram* and the worship of *Kali* and *Durga* I thought we had done with idolatry. But now I saw there were many idols such as *Agni*, *Vayu*, *Indra*, *Surya*, etc., who had no hands and feet and bodies, yet were perceptible by the senses. Their power was felt by all. The *Vaidiks* believed that if these were not propitiated the whole creation would be destroyed by excess or want of rain, by the fierce heat of the sun, or the tempest-

uous whirlwind. In their propitiation lay the well-being of the universe, in their wrath its destruction. Hence *Agni Vayu Indra* and *Surya* are worshipped as gods in the *Vedas*. *Kālī*, *Durgā*, *Rāma*, *Kṛishna* are all modern divinities of the *Tantras* and *Purānas*. *Agni*, *Vayu*, *Indra*, and *Surya*, these are the ancient vedic gods, and the pomp and circumstance of sacrifice concern them alone. Therefore I was obliged to give up altogether the hope of propagating the worship of *Brahma* by means of the *Vedas* which sanction the *Karma-kānda*. We now turned from the *Vedas* and became *Veda-sannyasi* householders. *Agni* also no longer retained a predominant place in our domestic ceremonies, as prescribed in the *Vedas*. But the *Brahmavadi* sages of old renounced everything and became *sannyasis*. After giving up the sacrificial ceremonies they could no longer remain at home, but disgusted with the elaborate rites of the *yagnas*, so contrary to wisdom, and desirous of salvation, they betook themselves to the forest. There they became one with that *Brahma* who is dearer than son, dearer than all riches. They gave up worshipping material gods. The *Upanishad* is the *Upanishad* of the forest, in the forest was it composed, in the forest was it preached, in the forest was it taught. It was forbidden even to read it in the house. The *Upanishad* came to our hands in the very beginning.

• But the ancient sages also were far from being satisfied in their hearts with sacrificing to such finite deities as *Agni Vayu* etc. In their midst also arose the question, where did these gods come from? The mystery of creation began to be seriously discussed amongst them. They said "Who knows for certain whence came this wondrous creation? Who has ever told us here whence all these things were born? The gods were born after this creation, then who knows from whom this universe has sprung? *Ko addhā veda ka iha pravachat kutaājātā kula iyam visṛishit Arvāgdevā asya visarjanendhā ko veda yata āvabhāva*" The *Rishis*, being unable to fathom the mystery of creation, and being filled with unrest and plunged in the darkness of dejection, devoted themselves with great intensity and singleness of purpose to the gaining of enlightenment. Then the God of gods, the Supreme Spirit revealed Himself in the pure hearts

of these steadfast and dispassionate *Rishis* and gave out the light of truth which passeth all understanding, whereby the *Rishis* were satisfied in mind and glad at heart, and they understood whence came this creation and who was its creator. Then they fervently expressed themselves in this hymn of the *Rigveda*. Before creation "there was then neither death nor immortal life. There was no day and night, neither was there knowledge. Then that one alone existed, animated by His own power. Naught existed but Him, this present universe was not. *Āfityurdsidamṛitam natarhi na ratryā ahna asit praketaḥ ānidavātam svadhayā tadekam tasmaddhānyanna parāḥ kin cha nāsa*" Those *Rishis* who came to know *Brahma* by dint of meditation and the grace of God, thus expressed His truths. 'He who gives life, He who gives strength, He whose commands the whole universe obeys, together with the gods; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death, who else is the God to whom we shall offer our oblations. *Īa ātmada baladā yasya viśhva upāsate pras'isham yasya devāḥ yasya cchayāmṛitam yasya mṛituh kasmai devāya havishā vidhema*' 'You know not Him who has created all these things, who dwelleth within your hearts distinct from all else. How indeed should they know when they all wander about enve'loped in the mist of ignorance, engaged in wrangling, satisfied with the pleasures of the senses and guided by the sacrificial *mantras*. "*Na tam vidātha ya ima jajānānyat yushmākamanantaram vabhūva Nihārena pravṛitā jalpā chasutṛiṇa ukthaś'asas'charanti*" The seeking after *Brahma*, the knowledge of *Brahma*, the truths relating to *Brahma*, see how brightly these things shine forth in the ancient *Rik* and *Yajurvedas*. Strange to say, the profound sayings of the *Upanishads* are contained in the ancient *vedas*, and it is these that constitute the glory of the *Upanishads*. The texts *Satyam gñānamanantam Brahma*" and "*Dvāsuparnā sayujā sahhāyā*" of the *upanishads*, are all sayings of the *Rigveda*, and have been extracted from it by the *Upanishads*. Should all else in the *Vedas* die, yet these truths will never die. This stream of truth, flowing onwards, flooded and purified and ennobled the lives of the *Upanishad Rishis*. Their lives were built up out of these truths. Through these they tasted of immortality, and

advanced on the path of salvation. It was owing to the influence of these truths that they exclaimed out of the fulness of their hearts, "*Veddhame tam puruṣham mahāntam ādityavarṇam tamasah parastāt. Tameva Vidyātāmṛtyumeti nānyah pañihā vidyateyandya*" "I have come to know that sublime and shining being beyond the confines of darkness; the worshipper overcomes death by knowing Him alone, besides this there is no other way of gaining salvation." I learnt that this was the supreme knowledge, and it had for its subject the one-without-second Brahma *Ekamevā dvitīyam*.

CHAPTER XIX.

On my return from Benares I found that our firm Carr Tagore & Co was in a tottering condition. Bills of exchange were coming in, but the money to meet them was hard to find. We had to provide the money daily with the utmost difficulty. How long could such a state of things continue? Meantime one day a *hundi* for Rs 30000 arrived, money for which was not forthcoming. The day drew near to its close but the money could not be raised. The holder of the draft took it back and went away without the money. The firm of Carr Tagore & Co thenceforth lost its prestige—and the office-doors were closed. The month of *phalgun* 1769 saw the downfall of Carr Tagore and Co's business. I was then 30 years old. A meeting of all the creditors was called, by the advice of the head-assistant Mr. D M Gordon. Three days after the winding-up of the business, they all assembled in the third-storey-room of the building. D M Gordon had prepared an account of our assets and liabilities, which he placed before the meeting. In it was shown that the total liabilities of our firm amounted to one crore of rupees, —the total money due realisable, was seventy *lakhs*,—there was a deficit of 30 *lakhs*. He said to those assembled: "The proprietors of the firm are willing to make up the deficit by adding their own personal property. Take the dues and assets of the firm, together with their *zemindary* rights, all under your control, and satisfy your respective dues, but there is a trust-property which does not belong to them of right, only this property you will not be able to touch. While Gordon was thus addressing the meeting, I said to Girindra Nath, "Mr. Gordon is warning the creditors that nobody can touch our trust-property. At this juncture we ought to come forward and say that although the trust-property cannot be made to change hands in fulfilment of our debts, yet we are ready to break up the trust, and give up even this property in order to clear off our debts. The best thing we can do is to adopt such means as will enable us to free ourselves entirely from our paternal debts. If these cannot be liquidated by the sale of other properties, then the trust-property must be sold too." The creditors, on the other hand, were beginning to show

signs of dissatisfaction on hearing that they were debarred from laying hands on a certain portion of the estate. But when at the next moment they heard that we were prepared to give all our property together with the trust-property into their hands, of our own free will without the least compunction and independently of any decree of the law courts they were astounded. At this proposal of ours, we saw that many kindly-disposed money lenders were moved to tears. They too were grieved at our impending misfortune. They saw that we had no hand in the rise and fall of the firm, that we were innocent and not to blame. We were so young and this terrible misfortune had befallen us. To-day all this wealth and property was ours to-morrow not a vestige of it all would remain—this was the thought that filled them with pity. Instead of being angry at their loss, on the contrary their hearts melted with pity. Whence did this pity enter into their hearts at this moment? He alone inspired them with compassion who is my lifelong friend. They proposed that as we had resigned all claims, we should get an annual allowance of Rs. 25000 out of the estate for our maintenance. Thus a friendly feeling was established between debtors and creditors. None of them at that time filed a suit in court in order to realise their dues. They took the whole of our property into their own hands and formed a committee of their principal men in order to manage it. A secretary to that committee was appointed on a salary of Rs. 1000. Under him were placed other assistants also. They carried on business under the name of Carr Tagore & Co in liquidation.

The meeting was dissolved after our creditors had established their claim to all our property. We two brothers set out on our way home. While driving back I said to Girindranath, 'We have just performed the *Vishvajit Yajna* by giving up everything.' "Yes," said he, "now let everyone know that we have kept nothing for ourselves, let them say, they have given all they possessed, *sarva-vedasam dadau*.' I said "What if people say so? The law courts will not listen to them. Whenever anybody files a plaint in court we shall have to swear that we have given everything, we have nothing left. Otherwise the law will not let us off. But as long as we have



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a shred of cloth left on our bodies, we cannot stand up in a Court of justice and solemnly affirm that we have given everything. As it is, we will give up everything, but we cannot take our oath upon it. May God and Righteousness protect us. May I never have to pass through the Insolvency Court." Thus conversing we reached home

Things turned out just as I wanted,—all our property went out of my hands. As in my mind there was no desire for the things of this world, so also no worldly goods were mine,—like unto like, both sides were balanced.

دراں ہوا کہ جز برق اندر طلب نباشد
گر خرمی بسوزد چندی عجب نباشد

"In that desire, may there be no other prayer but the prayer for lightning,—if lightning were to fall and destroy my hoard and harvest then I should not be surprised." If I were to go on repeating this and if lightning fell and consumed everything then what there to wonder at? What I say is "O Lord, I want nothing but Thee." He has graciously accepted my prayer, and revealing Himself unto me, wrenched away everything else, *Dumrīki thuddia mayessur nahī ki chibāke pām pīyun* What I had prayed for was now granted and realised. That was a day of days at the burning-ground,—and this day was just such another. I had taken another step forward. I reduced my staff of servants, sent all my houses and carriages to be auctioned, brought my food and clothing within reasonable bounds—became a *sanyāsī* without leaving home. I took no thought for what I should eat and how I should clothe myself on the morrow. Nor did I trouble myself as to whether to-morrow I should stay in this house or have to leave it. I became totally free from all desire. I had read in the Upanishads about the peace and happiness of him who desires nothing, and now I tasted of it in real life. As the moon is freed from *Rahu*,¹ so did my soul become free from the things of the world, and feel the heaven of Brahma. "O' Lord in the midst of untold wealth my soul was in agony, not having found Thee,—now, finding Thee, I have found everything."

1. Rahu is the Dragon's head or ascending node of the moon and cause of Eclipses. The story is—When the gods and demons churned the Ocean, it

At this time I used to remain absorbed in thought about deep philosophical doctrines from morning till noon. From noon till evening I would be engaged in studying the Vedas, the Vedānta, the Mahābhārata and suchlike *śāstras*, and in translating the Rīgveda into Bengali. In the evening I used to sit on the terrace on a broad blanket. There Brāhmas,—seekers after Brahma and earnest seekers after the truth would come and sit by me and discuss various *śāstras*. These discussions were sometimes carried on till after past midnight. I also looked over the articles for the Tatwabodhini Patrika at this time. Three or four months after the dissolution of our firm, Girindranath said to me one day, “Time is passing, but the debts are not being paid off at all. The *sahibs* are only sitting idle and drawing their pay. There is no hope of our debts being cleared at this rate. If we go on like this even the sale of our homestead would not enable us to deliver ourselves from these debts. I wish therefore to make this proposal to the committee of creditors, that if they entrust us with the management of our own affairs, we could devise some means of clearing off the debts before very long, by our own efforts and without much cost.” It hought this an excellent proposal, and shortly after we brought it forward at a meeting of the creditors. They agreed to it gladly and trustfully. Then we took the management into our own hands, transferred the office to our house, and engaged a *sahib* and a clerk. Thus did we begin to reel up the string of Carr Tagore and Co’s kite from the watch-tower of our own house. Whether it would snap halfway or not was the question.

was hunted to Vishnu, when the Amrita appeared, that Rahu, one of the demons, had tasted it. Vishnu immediately cut off the head of the offender, but as he had drunk of the water of life, neither head nor trunk would perish. The head taking the name of Rahu and the trunk that of Ketu, were placed in heaven as the ascending and descending nodes. According to popular notions, at the time of an eclipse Rahu devours the sun and moon; hence as soon as an eclipse is noticed the people make a dreadful noise by blowing horns &c. to cause Rahu to restore these luminaries.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TRUE YOGI.

Out of the four students who had been sent to Benares to collect and learn the Vedas, Anandachandra Bhattacharya returned with me to Calcutta after having studied of the Upanishads, *Katha*, *Praś'na*, *Mundaka*, *Chhândogya*, *Talavakâra*, *Sveîd's'vatara*, *Vâjasaṇeya*, and part of *Vrihadâraṇyaka*, of the Vedangas *Nirukta* and *Chhanda*, of the Vedanta philosophy annotated *Sutrabhâshya*, *Vedânta Paribhâshâ*, *Vedântasâra*, *Adhikaranamâlâ*, *Siddhantaresha*, *Panchadas'î*, and the annotated *Gitâbhâshya*, of the *Karmamimâmsâ* the *Tatwakaumudî*. Of the other three, the Rîgvedî student Ramânâtha Bhattâchârya had finished up to the 3rd chapter of the 7th *Ashtaka* of the Rîgveda Samhita, together with the 6th Chapter of the 1st. *Ashtaka* of its commentary. The Yajurvedic student Baneshwar Bhattacharya had learnt 31 chapters of the *Madhyandina Samhitâ*, the 2nd. chapter of the *Taittiriya Samhitâ*, 13 chapters of the first part of *Kanva Bhâshya*, and 25 chapters of its second part. The Sâṃavedî student Taranath Bhattacharya had studied of the Samaveda 36 *Sâmas* of the *Veyagâna*, the 4th *Prapâthaka* of the *Aranyagâna*, the 7th part of the *Uhgâna*, the third *Sukta-bhâshya* of the 6th. part of the *Ullara-bhâshya*, and the *Karmamimâmsâ*, of philosophy up to the *Jatikhhandana* of *Shastrâdîpikâ*. Of these, four men judging Anandachandra to be well versed in the *shastras*, and possessed of a reverential and devotional spirit, I gave him the title of Vedântavâgîsh, and appointed him to the post of *Upâchârya* of the Brahma Samaj.

The study of the Vedas led me to believe that it was not the actual moon, sun, wind and fire alone that the sages of old worshipped. It was that one Great God whom they worshipped under the forms of *Agni*, *Vayu* and many others. So we find in the Rîgveda, "एकं सवित्रावहुषावदत्यग्रं यमं नातरिब्रानसाहुः" The Rishis call that One God by various names, such as *Agni*, *Yama*, and *Vayu*. So also in the Yajurveda "एष ऊक्षेव सर्वे देवा" He Himself is, all the gods. It was with regard to this Vedic text that I had

stated in the preface of the Rigveda translation "That Being, whoever he may be, dwelling in the sun, is the Sun-god That Being, whoever he may be, dwelling in the wind, is the Wind-god. That Being, whoever He may be, dwelling in the fire, is the Fire-god", this means, not that the Vaidiks worship the outward material sun etc. but they worship the sentient spirit dwelling within. There is a vast difference between the gods of the *Tantras* and *Puranas* and the gods of the *Vedas*. But the common run of people in this country do not recognize this difference. They believe that the worship of *Kālī* and *Durgā* is inculcated in the *Vedas*. With a view to dispel these false ideas, and to acquire a knowledge of the gradual evolution of our ancient manners, customs and religion, I set to work to translate the Rig Veda with the help of a pundit from Benares. The first half of the original text of the Rigveda had been procured by the Sabha, and of the commentaries enough had been obtained to enable us to proceed with the work of translation for the present. But this was a stupendous task. In the *Samhitā* alone there were more than 10000 verses. I despaired of ever being able to finish it. However I went on translating as much as I could and publishing it in the *Tatwabodhinī Patrikā*.

Hitherto these two great texts only had found a place in the *Brahma Samaj* form of worship "सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म । आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभातः ।" This was incomplete. By the addition of "शान्तं शिवमहंते" they were made complete. In the year 1770, three years after the introduction of the *Samaj* form of worship, I added on "शान्तं शिवमहंते ।" He who is the presiding Deity of our soul, and who ever instils into it all wisdom and spirituality, He is "सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म" । We realise Him in our hearts. When we see this सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म in the midst of the beauty of this universe situated in boundless space, then we see that आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति, He shines forth as the embodiment of bliss and immortality. "सवासाध्यनरोक्षत्रः" । That self-existent Supreme Soul is without, even as He is within. Again He is "अनन्तरमवाक्षः । नित्यनिवात्मरंक्षः ।" Being without and within us, yet He exists in Himself, and is ever conscious of His blessed will that all may be elevated in wisdom and righteousness, love and goodness, He is "शान्तं शिवमहंते" ।

Seekers after God must realise Brahma in these three places. They must see Him within, see Him without, and see Him in that abode of Brahma where He exists in Himself. When we see Him within our soul we say, "Thou art the innermost soul of the soul; Thou art my father, Thou art my friend, Thou art my comrade" When we see Him without us, we say, "Thy royal throne is in the infinite sky" When we see Him in Himself, see that supreme Truth in His own sanctuary, then we say "Thou art 'शान्त' शिवमदैव" Thou art in Thine own Self Supreme Goodness and Peace, one without a second

We cannot think all these things at the same time. Sometimes we think of Him in our soul, sometimes we think of Him as being outside us, sometimes we think of Him as He exists in Himself. But that Being who is life without breath, that eternally wakeful Being at one and the same time dwells within himself, calm and serene, ever conscious of His own supreme goodness, inspires our hearts with wisdom and righteousness, and in the outer world dispenses all things desired by His creatures. 'Through countless ages He is ever the same, the Eternal NOW' "Who can describe His infinite glory, the recital of whose praise taxes the powers of the *Sruti*, *Smriti* and *Darsanas*" By His grace I have now come to believe that the *Yogi* who can see this trinity of His at one and the same time, and see that while existing in Himself He exists in the hearts of us all, while existing in Himself He exists outside us all, and exists in Himself, self-contained and self-conscious, time without end, he is the true *Yogi*. Realising His love, he offers his life and mind and love and devotion and all things to Him, and bearing His commandments aloft with dauntless spirit strives to please Him in all his actions. He is the foremost amongst those that worship Brahma.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TWO RAJAHS

About this time, in the month of *Ashvin* 1770 I went for a trip up the Damodar river taking a few friends with me. After winding along its bends for seven days, we moored our boat on one of its sand-banks one afternoon at 4 o'clock. There we heard that Burdwan was close by, only 4 miles off. I was at once seized with a curiosity to see Burdwan. I landed immediately and waded through four miles of sand to Burdwan. Rajnarayan Basu and one or two others were with me. When we reached the town, lamps were burning in all the houses and shops. We wandered about here and there, saw the town, the bazar, the palace. It seemed to me from outside the glass windows that the Rajah was sitting in one of the rooms of the palace, lit with candles. After having satisfied our curiosity, we returned to the boat through that same sand-bank. It was then late at night. Probably Rajnarayan Babu had never walked so much before. He could hardly keep up with us. With the greatest difficulty he managed to reach the boat and then lay down, I found he had got fever. The next day, in the early hours of the morning, I bathed in the sacred stream of the Damodar bright with the rays of the rising sun, put on a blue silk attire and purified myself by performing the daily worship. All of a sudden I beheld a beautiful phaeton coming along the *char* raising clouds of sand all around. On that camel's route was it possible for a carriage to progress, or for horses to gallop? I could not make out whither they were bound through this sandy tract. Then I saw the carriage stop in front of my boat. A man jumped down from the coach-box, and wanted to see me. I called him and asked what he wanted. With folded hands he said, "The Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan desires greatly to see you, and has sent this carriage. I hope you will kindly comply with his wishes." I said that now I had set out to see the river, the woods and the hills: visiting the Rajah was altogether beyond my programme, that I had come up by the river, and would go back by the river,

and would not go on land again. He said "If I fail to take you with me, the Maharaja will think I am very much to blame. Do me the favour to come and see the Rajah once. You are sure to be much pleased to see the extent of his regard for you. I will not go back without you." I yielded at last to his eager entreaties. I started for Burdwan after my midday meal and arrived there at the close of day. A well-furnished dwelling had been placed at my disposal. There the chief officials of the Rajah gathered round me,—his Govinda Banerjee and Kirti Chatterjee all came. From my house to the palace a sort of post was laid to enquire from moment to moment what I was doing and what I was saying. Next morning three or four bullock-carts loaded with rice, *dal*, flour, *soosie* and other articles of food were brought to my house. I asked the men why there was such a quantity of things. They said that rations on a scale appointed for the *Rajguru* had been sent to me by the Maharaja. At noon a carriage and pair pulled up at my door. I got in and drove to the palace. I saw the Rajah, who received me with great cordiality. He was then playing billiards, and everybody was walking round with him. I too joined in the fun of their game. He made me sit down on a raised seat. Seeing him so gentle and unassuming and so kind to me, I too felt drawn towards him. Thus did I become acquainted with him, and gradually his zeal for Brahmoism went on increasing. At my suggestion he set up a Brâhma Samâj in the palace building. I sent Shyamacharan Bhattacharya and Taraknath Bhattacharya to the Rajah in order to give him religious instruction and to conduct the service in this Brâhma Samâj. After this I constantly went to Burdwan and encouraged him and conversed with him on religious topics. He too was greatly pleased to have me with him. On whatever occasion I went there, whether for his birthday or for his picnics, we were sure to have prayers together. His heart was amply furnished with faith and reverence alike. One evening during worship he gave vent to his feelings as follows :—
 "How ungrateful I am! He has given me so much wealth yet I am not sufficiently grateful to him for it, I do not think of Him."
 But how very many poor and humble creatures have received so

little from Him, yet are so grateful to Him, and worship Him. How ungrateful I am! how degraded! With these words he began to shed tears

One day he even took me into the zenana quarters. There was a tank there, pointing to which he said "We sit here and fish." He then took me upstairs,—I saw a room spread with a gold-embroidered *muslind* and decorated just as on the occasion of a wedding in the house. He said "Here we sit." Taking me into another room, he said "From here the Rani can see me playing billiards." From all that I saw and heard in the inner apartments, it appeared to me that the Rani was as happy with the Rajah as he was with her. "सुखी भार्या भर्ता भर्ता भार्या तदैव च". One day the Rajah said to me, "I have a favour to ask of you which you must grant me." I wonder what he will say, I thought to myself, and asked him what it was. He said "You must take the trouble of giving a sitting, I will have your portrait painted." A capable English artist had then come to his house, and he painted my portrait. That likeness of myself as I was then is still in his room. Rajah Mahatab Chand is now no more, his son Aftab Chand too died at an early age. But his Brâhma Samâj still exists. A priest still makes the name of Brahma regularly resound there, but there is none to listen to him. The presiding deity of that empty prayer-hall is its only light.

One day, as I was going for a drive in Calcutta, a man came and gave me a letter on the way. On opening it, I found it was from Rajah Srish Chandra of Krishnagar. He wrote to say "I shall be glad if you will meet me at the Town Hall to-morrow at 5 o'clock." The next day at 5 I went to the Town Hall, and after a short time the Rajah came. I was greatly pleased to meet him. His conversation with me turned wholly on religious matters. When on the point of leaving he said "I have not been satisfied with such a short interview. I shall be in Calcutta three or four days longer, if you come one of these days to my house in the evening and talk to me I shall be delighted." He felt rather awkward to meet me in public. I was a leader of the Brahma Samaj, a Brâhmo; and he was Lord of *Navadvîpa*, head of the idolatrous community.



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This was our first meeting, of his own accord he came and made my acquaintance. I had founded a Brâhma Samâj in Krishnagar, and used to go there frequently. He had become anxious to meet me through hearing about me from others, and reading my sermons and other writings. One evening I went to his place to see him. He took me upstairs to his teriace where there was nobody else. Not a single light was there. He sat down at once on the floor. I also did the same. We got on as amicably as two *sakus*. He said

“एकीदिवः सर्वभूतेषु गुढः सर्व्व्यापी सर्व्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।

कर्त्तव्यञ्चः सर्व्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवली निर्गुणश्च” ।

His amiability and sincerity made me feel greatly attracted towards him—and we became bosom friends. When I took my leave he said “When you go to Krishnagar next time you must stay at my house one night,—will you?” I said, “that would be a great pleasure and honour. I will come whenever you ask me to” After this when I went to Krishnagar he invited me. I went to his palace in the evening. He took me to a charming private room and made me sit down. Nobody else was there, except his son Satishchandra. He sang a *dhrupad* for our entertainment. Singing went on till midnight. Sixty different kinds of dishes were served to me at dinner. I slept in the house. The Raja himself came and woke me up quite early in the morning, and after having shown me his house of worship, bade me good-bye.

At that time I was thus united by the bonds of religion to these two Rajahs. Of these one received me openly, the other with great secrecy but within his inmost heart.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FOUNDATION OF BRAHMA-DHARMA.

I had started with the idea that there were eleven Upanishads in all, and their commentaries had been written by S'ankarâchârya. I now found that there were several Upanishads which had not been annotated by S'ankarâchârya. On investigation I found there were 147 Upanishads. Those ancient ones that S'ankarâchârya had commented upon were the most authentic. In them were contained teachings about the knowledge and worship of Brahma, and the way of salvation. When these Upanishads came to be revered everywhere as the head and front of the Vedas and the choicest of all the *śāsthas*, then the Vaishnava and Shaiva sects began to disseminate works by the name of Upanishads in which they inculcated the worship of their own respective divinities, in place of the Supreme Soul. Then was composed the Gopal Tâpani Upanishad, in which the Supreme Being's place was occupied by Sri Krishna. In that Gopal Tâpani Upanishad Mathura is designated as Brahmapura and Srikrishna as Parabrahma. Again there is a Gopichandana Upanishad, in which instructions are given as to how the *tilaka* is to be made. In this way the Vaishnavas proclaimed the glory of their own deity. On the other hand the Shaivas proclaimed the glory of Shiva in another book called the Skandopanishad. There are also the Sundari Tâpani Upanishad, Devi Upanishad, Kaulopanishad and others, in all of which only S'akti is glorified. Eventually any and everybody began to publish anything and everything with the name of Upanishad. In the days of Akbar an Upanishad was again composed with the object of converting Hindus into Musulmans, — and it was called Allopanishad. How strange! Formerly I did not know of the existence of this thorny tangle of Upanishads, — only eleven Upanishads were known to me, with the help of which I had started the propagation of Brâhma Dharma, making them its foundation. But now I saw that even this foundation was shaky and built upon sand, even here I did not touch firm ground. First I went back to the Vedas, but could not lay the foundation of the Brahma Dharma there; then I came to the

eleven authentic Upanishads, but how unfortunate ! even there I could not lay the foundation. Our relation with God is that of worshipper and worshipped—this is the very essence of Brahmoism. When we found the opposite conclusion to this arrived at in S'ankaracharya's *S'ārīrak mīmāṃsā* of the *Vedānta Darsana* we could no longer place any confidence in it, nor could we accept it as a support of our religion. I had thought that if I renounced the *Vedānta Dars'ana* and accepted the eleven Upanishads only I would find a support for Brāhmoism—hence I had relied entirely upon these, leaving aside all else. But when in the Upanishads I came across—"सोऽहमस्मि" I am He ; "तत्त्वसि" Thou art That,—then I became disappointed in them also. These Upanishads could not meet all our needs,—could not fill our hearts. Then what was to be done now? What hope was there for us? Where should we seek a refuge for Brāhmoism ? It could not be founded on the Vedas,—it could not be founded on the Upanishads. Where was its foundation to be laid ? I came to see that the pure heart, filled with the light of intuitive knowledge,—this was its basis. *Brahma* reigned in the pure heart alone. The pure unsophisticated heart was the seat of Brāhmoism. We could accept those texts only of the Upanishads which accorded with that heart. Those sayings which disagreed with the heart we could not accept. These were the relations which were now established between ourselves and the Upanishads, the highest of all *śāstras*. In the Upanishad itself we read "हृदा मनोवा मनसाभिक्लृप्त" ! God is revealed through worship to the heart illumined by an intellect free from all doubt. To the soul of the righteous is revealed the wisdom of God. The *Rishi* of old who by means of contemplation and the grace of wisdom had seen the perfect *Brahma* in his own pure heart, records his experience in these words — "ज्ञान-प्रसादेन विमुक्तस्त्वत्तत्त्वसु पश्यते निश्चलं ध्यायमान" ! These words accorded with experience of my own heart, hence I accepted them. Again I read in the Upanishads that those who remain in their own villages and perform sacrifices and other prescribed rites, after death they attain the region of smoke, from smoke they pass into night, from

¹ The pure in spirit, enlightened by wisdom, sees the holy God by means of worship and meditation.

night to the dark fortnight, from the dark fortnight to the months of the summer solstice, from those months to the region of the fathers, from that region to the sky, from the sky to the region of the moon ; and having enjoyed the fruit of their good actions in that region they, in order to be born again into this world, fall from the region of the moon into the sky, from the sky they pass on to the air, from air they become smoke, from smoke they turn into vapour, from vapour to cloud, from the clouds they are rained down and spring up here as wheat, barley, food-plants, trees, sesamum and pulse-grains. Of those men and women who eat that wheat, barley and other food-stuffs they are born here as living creatures. These words appeared to me to be unworthy vain imaginings. I could not respond to them. They were not the transcription of the prompting of my heart. But my heart assented fully to the following noble saying of the Upanishad — “आचार्यकुलोद्देशधौत्य, यथाविधानं गुरो कर्मातिशेषेणाभिसमाहृत्य कुटुम्बे, युचौ देशे स्वाध्यायमधीयानो, धार्मिकान्विदधन्, आत्मनि सर्वेन्द्रियाणि सम्प्रतिष्ठाप्य, अहिंसन् सर्वभूतानि, अन्यत्र तीर्थेभ्यः स खल्वेवं वर्त्तयन् यावदायुषं ब्रह्मलोकमभिसम्पद्यते न च पुनरावर्त्तते न च पुनरावर्त्तते” ।” “After having studied the Vedas in your preceptor's home and having duly served your spiritual guide, return to your home, and after marriage read the Vedas in some holy spot, instruct your pupils and pious sons in the way of wisdom, and after having brought the senses under perfect control, support your life by wealth justly earned without giving pain to any living creature. He who lives thus for the whole term of his life upon this earth enters Brahma-loka after death, and never returns to this world any more, no, nevermore.” He who purifies his soul in this world by the doing of virtuous deeds in obedience to God's commandments, attains to sacred regions upon leaving this earth, and casting off his animal nature receives a body divine. In that sacred sphere he obtains a brighter vision of the glory of God, and having reached higher stages of wisdom, love and virtue he is translated to higher regions. Thus rising higher and higher he progresses from holy to holier spheres, from innumerable heavens to other heavens, “एष देवपथो पुण्यपथः” and returns not to earth again. In heaven there is no animality, no hunger, no thirst ; there is no hankering after women or wealth, neither lust,

nor anger, nor greed. There is eternal life, eternal youth. Thus from one heaven to another, the tides of wisdom, love, virtue and goodness carry that divine soul onward towards everlasting progress, and from his heart the fount of joy perennially springs. In a story of the Kathopanishad, Nachiketa thus describes heaven to the Lord of Death—

“सर्गे लोके न भयं किञ्चनास्ति न तत्र त्वं न जरया विमेति

उभे तौर्त्वा अश्नाया पिपासे शोकातिगोमोदते स्वर्गलोके।”

“In heaven there is no fear, thou art not there, O Death, neither is there old age. Free from both hunger and thirst and beyond the reach of sorrow, all rejoice in the world of heaven.” But how fares that sinner who commits sinful acts in this world? He who sins here, and repenteth not of his sinful deeds, and instead of desisting therefrom, falls into sin again and again, enters into doleful regions after death. “पुण्येन पुण्यं लोकं गच्छति पापेन पापं।” Holiness leads unto holy regions and sin into regions of sin. This is Vedic truth. The soul of the sinner goes to sinful regions according to the degree of his sinfulness, and when, after having continually burnt there with the agonies of remorse for his tortuous deeds, his expiation is at an end, then he receives grace. Then he attains to some appropriate sacred sphere by dint of such merit as he may have acquired upon earth, and enjoys his reward. According to the degree of wisdom, virtue and holiness that he may acquire there, he will attain to higher spheres, and travelling on that divine and holy path, will rise from one to another of countless heavens. By the grace of God the soul is infinitely progressive,—overcoming sin and sorrow this progressive soul must and will progress onwards and upwards,—it will not decline again upon earth. Sin never reigns triumphant in God’s holy kingdom. The soul is first born in the human body,—after death it will assume appropriate forms and pass from sphere to sphere in order to work out the fruits of its merit and demerit,—and will not again return here.

Again, when I saw in the Upanishads that the worship of Brahma leads to Nirvâna, my soul was dismayed at the idea. “कर्मणि विज्ञानमयस्य आत्मा परेऽव्यये सर्वं एकौ भवति।” All deeds together with the sentient soul, all become one in Brahma. If

this means that the sentient soul loses its separate consciousness, then this is not the sign of salvation—but of terrible extinction. The eternal progress of the soul according to the Brâhma-dharma on the one hand, and this salvation by annihilation on the other—what a vast difference! This Nirvana salvation of the Upanishads did not find a place in my heart. This soul instinct with consciousness—whether it dwells in high heaven or upon this lowly earth—when all its worldly desires become extinct, and when the only desire that night and day burns within it is that of attaining the supreme in-dwelling Soul, when it is free from desire and desirous of the Spirit, and in that state when it performs all the good works commanded by Him, serving Him with all humility and patience—then it is free from its mortal coil and crossing to the other side of this world, finds refuge in that lap of the eternal Brahma, which is beyond the pale of darkness, radiant with wisdom, and anointed with love! There filled with new life, and purified by His grace it remains eternally united in wisdom love and joy with that infinite wisdom love and joy, even as shadow unto light. That moment lasts forever. “सकृत् बिभात्यैव ब्रह्मलोकः।” “This is its final goal, this is its uttermost gain, this is its highest heaven, this is its supreme bliss.” “एषास्व परमागतिरिषास्व परमानन्दम् एषीस्व परमी लोक एषीस्व परमभानन्दः।” At these sublime words of the Vedas, the mind is satisfied, the soul finds peace, and the heart, filled to the brim with joy, keeps saying ब्रह्माभयं वै ब्रह्माभयं।

O perfect wisdom,
When will thy truth, ever new and full of light,
Shine in the sky of my heart
Through the long night I wait
And watch the eastern horizon,
With face upturned and folded hands,
In hopes of new happiness, new life and a new dawn of day.
What shall I see, what shall I know,
I know not what that joy shall be,
New light within my inmost heart.
By that light, full of great joy I will go singing towards my home,
Who cares to linger on in exile drear?

Now this blessing of His has descended upon my heart—"स्वस्तिः
पाराय वससः परस्तात्"—may your way to Brahmaloka be safe and clear
on the other side of this world of darkness. Having received this
blessing I can feel the eternal Brahmaloka from this world.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BOOK OF BRAHMA-DHARMA

The problem that now occupied my thoughts was this,—what was to be the common ground for all Brahmos? *Tantras, Puranas Vedas, Vedanta, Upanishads*, none of these afforded a basis of unity for Brahmos, a foundation for *Brahma dharma*. I decided that the *Brahma dharma* must have a creed that should be the meeting-point of all Brahmos. Thinking thus, I laid my heart open to God, and said—"Illumine Thou the darkness of my soul" By His mercy my heart was instantly enlightened. With the help of this light I could see a creed for the *Brahma-dharma*, which I immediately took down in pencil on a piece of paper lying before me, which paper I threw at once into a box and locked it. It was then the year 1770, and I was 31 years of age. The creed or seed thus remained within the box. I thought next that the Brahmos required a sacred book, and thereupon asked Akshaykumar Dutt to take pen and paper and write to my dictation. Then I laid my heart fervently open to God. The spiritual truths that dawned on my heart through His grace, I went on uttering as fluently and forcibly as the current of a river falling from the mouth of the Upanishads, and Akshaykumar kept taking them down at once. *Brahmavadino vadanti* I began with fervour, the *Brahmavadis* say. What do the *Brahmavadis* say? "यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि जीवन्ति यत् प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति तत्विजिज्ञासस्व तद्ब्रह्म ।" He from whom these things possessed of power, and all creatures, living and moving beings and animals have sprung, and having sprung by whom they are kept alive, and towards whom they go and into whom they ultimately enter, desire to know Him particularly, He is Brahma. Then this truth appeared in my heart, that God is bliss. Upon this I exclaimed—"आनन्दाद्देव सखिमाणि भूतानि जायन्ते आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति आनन्दं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । From Brahma who is joy these beings have sprung, and having sprung they are kept alive by Brahma who is joy, and towards Brahma who is joy they go and ultimately enter into Him. I saw that first there was one birthless soul, the Parabrahma only, and

nothing else. Immediately I said, “इदं वा अये नैवकिञ्चिदासीत् सदिधे सौम्ये दमयमासीत् एकमेवास्तीत्यर्थः ।” This universe was formerly naught. Before the birth of this universe, O beloved disciple, there existed only the one true Parabrahma without a second. He is this sublime spirit unborn He is decayless, deathless, fearless and everlasting. I saw that, having thought over Time, Space, Cause and Effect, Sin and Merit, and the results of action, He created this world. सतपीतयत् । स तपस्तपः इदं सर्वमसृजत यदिदं किञ्च । He meditated upon the creation of the universe, and having so meditated He created all this that is. एतन्माज्जायते प्राणो मन सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च । खं वायु ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य आरिणी From Him have sprung life, mind and all the senses, and the sky, air, light, water, and this earth that contains them all. I saw that all things were ordained according to His laws. I said “भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च स्रव्युर्ध्वावति पञ्चनः ” Through fear of Him fire kindles and the sun gives heat, through fear of Him the clouds, the air and death circulate Thus as the truths of the Upanishads began to successively appear in my heart, so did I pronounce them one after the other. Finally I ended with the following—

“यथायमग्निज्वालाग्ने तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषः सर्वानुभूः ।

यथायमग्निज्वालाग्ने तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषः सर्वानुभूः ।

तमेव विदित्वातिष्ठत्युमेति नान्य पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय । ”

“ That all-knowing Being, radiant and immortal, in this boundless space, that all-knowing Being, radiant and immortal, within this soul, knowing Him the seeker conquers death There is no other road to salvation ” Thus by the grace of God, and through the language of the Upanishads, I evolved the foundation of the *Brahma-dharma* from my heart. Within three hours the book of *Brahma-dharma* was completed ¹ But to understand and grasp its inner meaning, it will take me my whole lifetime,—and even then it will not be finished It is my humble prayer to God, the inspirer of faith, that my reverence for these truths of the *Brahma-dharma* may remain unwavering. The work does not represent the sweat of my brow, but only the out-pourings of my heart Who inspired me with these truths? “विद्योद्योतः”

¹ The explanation of the texts was written long after the publication of the 1st and 2nd parts of the *Brahma-dharma*.

प्रबोद्धवान्” He who again and again inspires us with intelligence in the paths of religion, worldly prosperity, desire and salvation, that living Spirit himself inspired my heart with these truths. They are not the conclusions of my weak intellect nor the ravings of a deluded or wandering mind. They are God-sent truths that gushes from my heart. These living truths have descended on my heart from Him who is the life of Truth, the light of Truth. Then did I come to know Him. I came to know that he who seeks Him finds Him. It was by dint of my longing alone that I was enabled to gain the dust of his feet, and that dust became the ointment of my eyes. When the work was completed I divided it into sixteen chapters.* The first chapter was called the Chapter of joy. Thus was composed the Upanishat relating to Brahma, or the Brâhmî Upanishat. Therefore it is written at the end of Part I. of the Brahma-dharma “उक्तात उपनिषत् ब्राह्मो वाचत उपनिषदमब्रुम्युपनिषत्”। “The Upanishat has been told unto you, this is that Upanishat which relates to Brahma—the Brâhmî Upanishat” Let no man think that our Vedas and Upanishads were discarded by me altogether, and that we did not keep in touch with them at all. The Brahma-dharma was built of the essential truths contained in the Vedas and Upanishads, and my heart was witness thereunto. The Brahma-dharma was the fruit on the top-most branch of the Vedic Tree of life. The Upanishat is the crowning-point of the Vedas, and the crowning-point of the Upanishads is the Brâhmî Upanishat—the Upanishat relating to Brahma. This has been incorporated in Part I of the Brahma-dharma. It was in the Upanishat that I first found an echo answering to the spiritual emotions of my soul, hence I endeavoured to establish the Brâhma-dharma on the whole of the Vedas and the whole of the Upanishads, but found to my sorrow that I could not do so. But this sorrow is vain, since the entire mine does not contain unalloyed gold. The worthless ore has to be broken in order to extract gold therefrom. Not that all the gold contained in the mine has been extracted. Many truths still remain deeply embedded in the mine of the Vedas and

* A long time after the Brahma dharma was published, when I was staying in Missouri, I inserted the following text of the Upanishads into its 16th chapter. “तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सुरयः दिवीव चक्षुराततं।” .

Upanishads. Whenever devout, pure and earnest souls desire to seek for them, their heart-gates will be opened by the grace of God, and they will be able to unearth those truths from that mine.

It is a self-evident truth that only those whose hearts have been purified by good deeds can aspire to the worship of Brahma. What is that virtue, and what are its precepts? This it is positively necessary for Brāhmos to know, and to mould their characters according to those precepts is their daily duty. Therefore the Brāhmos must have religious commandments and injunctions. As you must read the Upanishat relating to Brahma in order to know Brahma, so you must purify your heart by conforming to the laws imposed by religion. These are the two branches of the Brāhma-dharma: firstly the Upanishat, secondly the moral code. The Upanishat forming the first part of the Brahma-dharma was completed. Now began the search for commandments. I proceeded to read the Mahabharata, the Gita, the Manu smṛiti etc., and by collecting verses therefrom to swell the record of commandments. In this work I got great help from the Manu smṛiti. It also contains verses from other smṛitis, from the Tantras, the Mahabharata and the Gita. I had to work very hard to record these commandments. First I divided them into seventeen chapters, then omitting one I made this part also consist of sixteen chapters. The first verse of the first chapter contains this injunction that the householder must keep touch with Brahma in all his actions “ब्रह्मनिष्ठो गृहस्थः स्यात् तच्च ज्ञान परायणम् । यद्व्यक्तं कर्म प्रकुर्वीत तद्ब्रह्मणि समर्पयेत् ।” The *grihasta* or house-holder must be an adherent of Brahma and a seeker after truth, and he must offer all his deeds to Parabrahma. The second verse relates to the duties of children towards their parents “मातरं पितरञ्चैव साक्षात् प्रवृक्ष्य देवताम् । मया गृहो निषेवेन सदा सर्व्वयजनः ।” “The son of the house should look upon his father and mother as visible deities, and serve them always with devotion.” The last verse contains injunctions as to the way in which members of the family should treat one another in the home—माता जेष्ठ, सप्त पित्रा माया युवः स्वका तनूः । द्याया स्वदासवर्ग्यं दुहितृ कृपणं परम् । तन्मादेतैरविच्छिन्नः सहितासङ्गुरः सदा । The elder brother is like a father, wife and son are like one's own body, the servants are like one's own shadow and the daughter

is an object of great tenderness ; hence, even when sorely tried by these do not give way to impatience but be forbearing always. “अतिवादाभिरिच्छेत् नावमन्ये न कच्चन नचेसं देहमाश्रित्य देवं कुर्वीत केनचित् ।” Bear with the improper language of others, do not insult anyone, whilst occupying this mortal frame be no man’s foe. The second and third chapters treat of the duties and behaviour of husband and wife towards each other. The fourth chapter deals with religious precepts, Ch V with Contentment, Ch. VI with being truthful in word and deed, Ch. VII. with bearing witness, Ch. VIII with goodness Ch. IX with giving in charity, Ch X. with self-control, Ch XI with moral maxims, Ch XII. with avoiding slander, Ch XIII. with controlling the senses, Ch. XIV with giving up sin, Ch. XV with the control of speech and of the mind and body, and Ch XVI. with religious faith. The last two verses are—“मृतं शरीरमुत्सृज्य काष्ठं लोष्टुं समं चितौ । विमुखा वात्यवा यान्ति धर्मज्ञा अनुगच्छति । तस्माद्भर्तुं सहायार्थं नित्यं सञ्चिनुयात् शनैः । धर्मेण हि सहायेन तमस्तरति दुस्तरम् । Friends turn away their faces and depart, leaving the dead body like a log of wood on the ground, Dharma or virtue follows in its wake. Therefore habitually and gradually lay by a store of virtue for your need. With the help of Dharma man is enabled to cross the impenetrable darkness of this world. “एष आदेश एष उपदेश एतदनुशासनम् । एवमुपासितव्यमेवमुपासितव्यम् ॥ “These are the commandments, these the precepts, thus the scripture, thus shalt thou worship Him, thus shalt thou worship Him.” He who reads or listens to this holy Brahma-dharma in a calm and chaste spirit, and acts according to its religious principles with a heart devoted to Brahma, shall obtain fruit everlasting.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A PRAYER BY FENELON

Thus in the year 1770 was the Brahma-dharma compiled in book-form. The doctrines of *Advaitavâda*, *Avatârvâda* and *Mâyâvâda* had no place therein. It was written in the Book of Brâhma-dharma that the relation of friendship subsisted between God and soul, and that they were constantly together. “वासुपत्नीं सृजन् सखाया” —hence *Advaitavâda* was denied. The Brâhma-dharma says “न बभूव कश्चित्” “He Himself became naught.” He became not the material universe, neither trees nor creepers, neither birds, nor beasts, nor man. Hence *Avatârvâda* was denied. The Brâhma-dharma says, “सततोऽतस्य सतपन्ना इदं सर्वमसृजत यदिदं किञ्च” । “He thought within Himself, and thinking within Himself He created all this that is.” This universe is the outcome of perfect truth. This universe is relative truth, its creator is the truth of truth, the absolute truth. This universe is not dreamstuff, neither is it a mental illusion, but it exists in reality. The truth which has given it birth is the absolute truth, and this is relative truth. Thus was *Mâyâvâda* denied. Hitherto the Brâhmos had no sacred book, their doctrines, principles and aims were scattered here and there in various books, now they were focussed in a concise form. This attracted the hearts of many Brahmos, and flooded them with the waters of holiness. This Book of Brahma-dharma is bound to attract the hearts of all who possess one. During the Brâhma Samâj prayers the 1st chapter was read in place of the Vedas that used to be read out formerly, and the book of Brahma-dharma was read instead of the Upanishads. Henceforth the Brâhmos began to recite the following text of the Brâhma-dharma during prayers—असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय मृत्योर्मांसमृतं गमय । आशिषवीर्यं च रुद्र यत्ते दक्षिणं सुखं तेन मां पाहि नित्यम् । either in the original Sanskrit or in the translation. Lead me, O Lord, from untruth to truth, lead me from darkness unto light, from death unto immortality. O Thou who

art self-effulgent, reveal Thyself unto me. O Thou dread God, may Thy benign countenance protect me for ever an ever.

The building of the third floor of the Samâj house had been commenced last year, and we are urging on its completion before the 11th Magh of this year. This will be the 19th anniversary of the Brâhma-Samâj, and the week passed in preparations for chanting the new *swadhyâya* in Vedic tones, seated in the new third storey, for the offering of new hymns of praise to our most worshipful Lord, for the singing of new songs. The room was finished by the 11th Magh, and the Samâj wore a new aspect. The white marble reading-dais, the well-decorated singing platform in front, the wooden gallery rising east and west,—all was new, and beautiful and white. The whole was lighted by crystal chandeliers. We arrived with our family party at the Samâj in the evening. Every face bespoke new zeal and new love, every one was filled with delight. Vishnu from his place in the choir gave out the song “परिपूर्णानन्द” then the Brâhmo service commenced, all of us reciting the *swadhyâya* in unison. Verses were recited from the Book of Brâhma dharma. The service was brought to a close with the words “*Santih, Santih, Santih harsh om*”. As all became silent I stood up in front of the dais, and read the following prayer with a heart full of joy and devotion.

“O Lord ! If most men fail to realise Thee through this beautiful universe that thou hast spread all round us, that is not because Thou art far from any of us. Thou art more vividly near to us than any thing that we touch with the hand ; but our senses, taken up with external things, have kept us under the spell of illusion and turned us away from Thee. Thy light shines forth through darkness, but the darkness knows Thee not. “तमसि तिष्ठन् तमसोऽनरीयं तमो न वेद ।” As Thou art in the darkness, so art Thou also in light. Thou art in the air, Thou art in the sky, Thou art in the clouds, Thou art in the flowers, Thou art in the scent ; O Lord ! Thou revealest Thyself everywhere, Thou shinest through, all Thy works : but erring and thoughtless man heeds Thee not. The whole universe proclaims Thee alone, and repeatedly sounds Thy holy name aloud, but we are so insensible by nature that we remain deaf even to the mighty tones

proceeding from the universe. Thou art all around us, Thou art within our hearts, but we wander far from our hearts ; we do not perceive our soul, and do not feel Thy presence therein. O Thou Supreme Spirit ! O eternal spring of light and beauty ! O ancient One, without beginning and end, life of all living creatures ! they who seek Thee within themselves, their endeavours to see Thee are never fruitless. But alas ! how small the number of those that seek Thee ! The things Thou hast given to us have so engrossed our minds that they do not let us recall the hand of the giver. Our minds have not a moment free to turn away from worldly pleasures and think of Thee. We depend on Thee for life, yet live in forgetfulness of Thee. O Lord ! unless we know 'Thee what is life ? What is this world ? The meaningless things of this world—the passing flower, the ebbing current, —the fragile palace, the fading picture, the glittering metals appear real to us and attract our minds, we think them to be pleasing things, but we do not consider that the pleasure they afford us is given to us by Thee through them. The beauties Thou hast showered upon Thy creation have concealed Thee from our sight. So high and holy art Thou, that our senses reach Thee not Thou art “ सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ” Thou art “ अशब्दमस्य ईश्वरमन्यतया रसद्वित्यनगम्यवच्च । ” Hence they that have debased themselves utterly by brutal deeds cannot see Thee,—alas ! some even doubt Thy existence. Unfortunate that we are, we take that which is true to be a shadow and that which is a shadow to be reality. That which is worthless is all in all to us, and that which is our all is nothing ! These vain and worthless things are suited to these base and inferior minds. O Supreme Spirit, what is it that I see ! I see Thee revealed in all things ! He who has seen thee not, has seen naught, He who enjoys thee not, has not tasted of any enjoyment ; his life is like a dream, his existence is vain. Ah ! how unhappy is that soul, wretch, not knowing thee, is friendless, hopeless, and without a resting-place. How happy is that soul which seeks after thee, which yearns to find thee. But he alone is supremely happy, to whom thou hast revealed the full glory of thy face, whose tears have been dried by thy hand, who by thy loving mercy has attained the fulfilment of all desire in attaining thee. Ah me ! how long, how much longer must

I wait for that day on which I shall be filled with the fulness of joy in Thy presence, and bring my will in harmony with Thine. Flooded with joy by this hope, my soul says, O Lord, there is none equal to Thee. My body feels faint, the world fades away at this moment when I see Thee, who art the Lord of my life, and my support everlasting ”

This prayer was composed by the great Fenelon, the French *brahmavādi* and Rajnarayan Basu has made a fine translation of it, which I have interspersed with suitable texts from the Upanishads. After this prayer was read I saw that many Brāhmos were affected to tears, such feelings had never before been witnessed in the Brāhma Samāj. Hitherto the severe and sacred flame of knowledge alone had been lighted in Brahma's shrine, now he was worshipped with the flowers of heart-felt love.

CHAPTER XXV.

A VISIT TO THE TEMPLE OF KAMAKHYA, ASSAM

The Tatwabodhini Sabha has been established ten years now, yet Pujas are still performed in our house, the Durga Puja and Jagaddhatrî Pooja. I do not think it right to hurt everybody's feelings and go against everybody's opinion by abolishing long-established poojahs and festivities from our ancestral home. The best plan is for me to keep aloof and take no part in them myself. If any members of my family have faith in them, or regard them with devotional feelings, it would be wrong to wound those susceptibilities. In consultation with my brothers, and with their permission, I gradually tried to stop the pooja celebrations. My youngest brother Nagendranath had lately returned from Europe, and seeing his liberal mind and broad ideas I had hoped that he would support my views and oppose idolatry. But in this I was doomed to disappointment. He said that the Durga Poojah was a bond of society, a sure and fruitful means of promoting friendly intercourse and establishing good relations with all. It would hurt everybody's feelings if this was interfered with, and it would not be right to do so. However, by dint of my reasonings and entreaties my brothers were prevailed upon to give up the Jagaddhatrî Pooja. Since then the Jagaddhatrî Pooja was banished from our house for ever. The Durga Poojah went on as before. I still had to keep up the old practice of leaving home during the Durga poojas, that I had begun with the adoption of Brâhmoism. This time in the year 1771, in order to avoid the poojas I set out towards Assam. I went by steamer to Dacca, and thence crossing the Meghna reached Gauhati by the Brahmaputra. When the steamer arrived at Gauhati, the commissioner and several other big people came to see it, and met me also. They were all pleased to make my acquaintance. Hearing that I wanted to see the Kamakhya temple they all promised to send their own elephants. In my eagerness to go and see this temple of Kamakhya, I was up and ready by 4 o'clock in the morning, but saw no elephants on the bank except that of the Commissioner, which was waiting for me there.

He was the only man who had kept his word. At this I was delighted, and having landed began to walk, telling the *mahut* to follow with the elephant. After having gone a short distance I saw that the elephant was lagging behind. The *mahut* was trying to get it across a small canal. Seeing this I waited for the elephant a short time, but it began to get late, the *mahut* was unable to make the elephant cross the canal. I lost patience, and could wait no longer. I walked six miles till I arrived at the foot of the Kâmâkhya hill, and without stopping to take rest, began to climb it. The hill-pathway was paved with stone. On either side of the road was a thick jungle, which the eye could not penetrate. The path led straight up. Alone I kept on ascending that solitary forest track; it was then shortly before sunrise. There was a slight drizzle, but I climbed on unheeding. I had got up about three fourths of the way, when my legs began to give way and refused to do my bidding. Tired and worn out I sat down upon a high stone. I remained sitting alone in that jungle soaked within by the sweat of exertion, and without by the rain—afraid lest tigers, bears or what not should come out from the jungle. At this juncture the *mahut* put in his appearance. He said “I was unable to bring the elephant, and seeing your honour walking on alone I followed as fast as I could.” I had then partly recovered my strength and regained the control of my limbs, so I began to climb the hill again with him. On the top of the hill was a broad plateau, studded with a number of huts, but not a soul was to be seen anywhere. I entered the Kamakhya temple, it is not a temple but a cave in the rocks, in which there was no image, only a *yonimudra*. After seeing this, and exhausted with walking, I came back and refreshed myself by bathing in the Brahmaputra. Its cool waters instilled fresh vigour into my body. I then saw that a crowd of about four or five hundred people were making a row on the banks of the stream. On being asked what they wanted, they said: “We are the *pandas* of Kamakhya Devi, you have seen Kamakhya, but have given us nothing. We have to perform the goddess’ worship till late in the night, so we can’t get up till late in the morning. “Go away” I said to them, “you will get nothing from me.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

A VISIT TO THE CAVE TEMPLE, MOULMEIN.

Again next year, as the beauty of Autumn unfolded itself, the desire for travel was kindled within my breast. I could not make up my mind where to go this time. Intending to take a river-trip, I went to see a boat on the Ganges. There I saw a big steamer on which the sailors were busily engaged in work. It seemed that the vessel would soon go on a voyage. I asked when it would get to Allahabad. The men said that the ship would go out to sea in two or three days. On hearing this, I thought it would be a very good opportunity of satisfying my desire for going on the sea. I at once went to the captain and engaged a cabin, and in due time set out for a sea-voyage on board ship. I had never seen the blue waters of the sea before. The sight of the varied and distinctive beauty of day and night on the bright-blue, undulating and infinite ocean plunged me into the depths of the glory of the Eternal Spirit. On reaching the sea after one night spent on the rocking waves, the steamer cast anchor at a certain place at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. I saw a stretch of white sand in front, with what appeared to be a settlement upon it, and went out in a boat to see the place. As I was walking about, I saw some Chittagong Bengalis with amulets on their necks, coming towards me. "How come you here and what is it you do here?" I asked them. They said "We are traders. This Aswin we have brought an image of the mother here." I was astonished to hear of the Durga poojah festival in this Burmese town Khaek-phu. What! the Durga poojah here too! From there I returned to the steamer, and sailed towards Moulmein. When, leaving the sea, the ship entered the Moulmein river, I thought it was like coming into the river Ganges from Gangâsâgar. But this river was not at all pretty. The water was slimy and full of crocodiles. Nobody bathed in it. Arrived at Moulmein the ship cast anchor. Here a Mudaliar of Madras received me. He came up to me and introduced himself. He was a high Government official and a real gentleman. He took

me to his house. During my short stay in Moulmein I remained his guest, and had a very pleasant time. The roads of Moulmein are clean and broad. In the shops on both sides only women were selling various commodities. I bought some boxes and fine silk stuffs from them. As I was going through the bazar looking about me, I came to a fish market, where I saw big fish laid out for sale on big tables. I asked what these huge fish were. "Crocodiles" they said. The Burmese eat crocodiles. The Buddhist doctrine of *Ahimsa* (kindness to living beings) is on their lips only, but crocodiles are inside their stomachs. I was walking one evening along the broad streets of Moulmein, when I saw a man coming towards me. As he approached I saw he was a Bengali. At that time I was surprised to see a Bengali there,—whence came a Bengali here across the seas? Bengalis are ubiquitous. "Whence come you here?" said I. He replied "Misfortune has brought me here." I at once understood what the misfortune was, and asked "How long did the misfortune last?" He said "Seven years." "What had you done?" I asked. He said "Nothing much, I only forged a Govt. promissory note. I have served my time now, but can't go home for want of money." I offered to pay his passage. But where was the home he would go to? He had set up business there, had married and was living happily. Why should he go home to show his blackened face?

The Mudaliar told me there was a cave here worth seeing, and if I wished he could take me to see it. I agreed. On the night of the new moon at high tide he brought a long boat with a wooden cabin in the middle. That night Mudaliar and I, with the captain of the steamer and seven or eight others got into the boat and started at midnight. The whole night we sat up in the boat. The Englishmen began singing their English songs, and asked me to sing Bengali songs also. I sang a few hymns now and then, which they did not understand or like at all—they only laughed. After travelling twenty-four miles that night, we reached our destination at 4 o'clock in the morning. Our boat put to shore. It was then still dark. Not far from shore we saw lights glimmering from a house surrounded by trees and shrubs. Impelled by curiosity I went out in the darkness alone in that unknown place to see what it was. I saw a small

hut, inside which some ascetics with shaven heads in yellow garb were carrying candles about and placing them hither and thither. I was surprised to see men like the *dandi* sect of Benares here also. How should *dandis* come here? Afterwards I learnt that they were *phungis*, or Buddhist priests and preceptors. I was watching their play of light unobserved, when one of them caught sight of me and took me inside the room. They gave me a sitting-carpet and water to wash my feet, thus showing their hospitality to me who had come to their house. Hospitality is one of the highest duties of the Buddhists. Day broke and I returned to the boat. The sun rose. Then the other guests of Mudaliar came and joined us there, making up a party of fifty in all. Mudaliar treated us all to breakfast. He had procured several elephants, on each of which three or four of us sat and went through the great big jungle. The place was studded with small hills and thick jungles. The elephant was the only means of locomotion here. At 3 in the afternoon we arrived at the mouth of the cave. Here we got down from our elephants and walked on through a jungle waist-deep. The mouth of the cave was small, and we had to enter it on all fours. After crawling a few steps we were able to stand upright. It was very slippery inside and our feet began to slip. Treading cautiously we proceeded some distance. It was pitch dark, at 3 P. M. it seemed like 3 A. M. What we were afraid of was that if we lost our way in the passage, how were we to get out? We should have to roam about this cave the whole day. This thought made me keep an eye on the light from the narrow opening wherever I went. Inside that dark cave the fifty of us dispersed and stood apart. Each had powdered sulphur in his hand. Each one of us placed the sulphur-powder in a niche in the rocks wherever he stood. After we had placed ourselves in position, the captain lit his powder. Thereupon each of us applied a match to his own powder all at once. Fifty different parts of the cave were lighted up by fifty torchlights, and we could see the whole of the interior. What a huge cave! We looked upwards, but its height was beyond the range of our sight. We marvelled to see the natural and varied moulding inside the cave, wrought by the force of rain.

After this we came outside, had a picnic on that mountain and

returned to Moulmein. On our way back we heard the sound of music produced by several instruments. We went in the direction of that sound and saw some Burmese dancing there with various contortions. Joining in their merriment, the captain and other *sahibs* also began to dance in like manner with great gusto. A Burmese woman who was standing at her door, seeing that the *sahibs* were making fun of them, whispered something in the ears of the wildly excited Burmese, and they at once stopped their dancing and music and fled. The *sahibs* tried hard to persuade them to dance again, but they wouldn't listen and made themselves scarce. So is the influence of women over men in Burma. We returned to Moulmein. I went to see a highly respectable Burmese official at his house, and he received me with courtesy. He sat on a chair placed on the floor-cloth. I sat on another. The room was a big one. At the four corners his four young daughters were sitting sewing something. When I was seated, he said "*ada*", upon which one of the girls came and placed a round *pan*¹ box in my hand. On opening it I saw there were *pan*-spices inside. This is the way Buddhist householders honour their guests. He presented me with some cuttings from a fine flowering tree of his country akin to the Asoka tree. I brought them home and planted them in the garden, but could not keep them alive in this country even with the greatest care. The fruit of this tree is a favourite eatable of the Burmese. If they have 16 rupees with them they will pay that sum for this fruit. To them it is a great delicacy, but to us even its smell is intolerable.

¹ Betel leaves usually presented to guests.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A VISIT TO THE TEMPLE OF JAGANNATH, PURI.

On returning from Burmah I went to Cuttack that year at the end of *Falgun*. Taking the route by which pilgrims go to Jagannath, I reached Cuttack by palanquin stages. There I put up in a hut. In the month of *Chaitra* the sun in Cuttack was very fierce and I felt overpowered by the heat. From there I went to my *zamindari kutcherry* situated in a place called Pandua, and remained there some time to look after the *zemindari*. Thence I went to Puri to see Jagannath, travelling at night by palanquin stages. At the break of day I arrived at the edge of a beautiful tank not far from Puri and heard its name was Chandan-jatra Tank. There I got down from the palanquin and removed all the fatigue of travel by bathing in the refreshing waters of the tank. No sooner had I come out from my bath than a *pāndā* of Jagannath came and got hold of me. I at once accompanied him on foot. I had no shoes on, which pleased the *pāndā* very much. On reaching the temple I saw the gate locked, and a crowd of people standing outside, all eager to see Jagannath. The *pāndā* had the keys of the temple with him and he proceeded to unlock the gates. When one gate had been opened, I saw a long corridor inside the temple, into which the *pāndā* entered and opened another door, and I saw another corridor. There were a thousand pilgrims behind me, who rushed into the temple crying "Jai Jagannath" when the *pāndā* opened the last door. I was taken unawares and carried away by the surging crowd. My companions managed to hold and keep me safe somehow, but my spectacles fell off and got broken. I could not make it convenient to see the image of Jagannath, but saw the formless Jagannath alone. There is a saying here to the effect that one sees whatever one wishes to see in this temple of Jagannath. In my case that proved to be true. In that narrow, dark and stuffy temple there was an unimaginable crowd of pilgrims, men and women. It was hardly possible for the women to preserve their decorum. Caught in that billowing mass I

was swayed hither and thither, and it seemed impossible to keep standing in any one place even for a single moment. Then the *Jamadar* and *Pândās* who were with me joined hands to form a sort of railing, and surrounded me on three sides. In front Jagannath's jewelled throne itself constituted my protection. I could then look round freely. In front of Jagannath there was a big copper vessel full of water, in which his reflection could be seen. The teeth of this reflected image were brushed, and water poured on it again, this completed Jagannath's bath and toilet. The *pândās* then climbed on to the image of Jagannath and adorned it with new clothes and new ornaments. It was then past 11 o'clock. After this it was time for the holy repast, and I came away. From there I went to the temple of *Vimalā Devi*. Here there were very few people. Everybody noticed that I did not salute *Vimalā Devi*. The *Uriyas* were highly incensed. "Who is this person that does not bow down, who is he?"—and they all came at me threateningly. Realising the situation my *pândā* brought me back to my appointed lodgings, where he said to me 'It was unwise of you not to salute *Vimalā Devi*. It has given great offence to the pilgrims. It was nothing but a bow, you might have done it.' "Talk of not saluting your *Vimala Devi*," said I to him, "why I did not even bow down to *Maya Devi*. Do you know, I went to *Maya Puri*. Going to the temple of *Maya* I saw her, she is "तन्वी श्यामा शिखरदम्भा,"¹ half reclining on a jewelled couch resplendent with her beauty. She did not deign to take any notice of me whatever, one of her companions signed to me to bow down. 'I do not salute any created god or goddess,' said I, at which they bit their tongues deprecatingly. *Mayadevi* said to them 'If he doesn't make a reverence, let him offer a flower.' I did not make any reply to this and came out of her room. On coming downstairs I went into the front verandah in order to go out. But as I made a step forward, I saw another verandah before me, beyond that, yet another verandah. Thus as many verandahs as I passed through, so many more came in front. I went across

¹ "Of slender make and fair, with snow-white teeth"—(*Meghaduta*).

several one after the other, but could not make an end of them. Then I understood that I was caught in the meshes of *Maya*. At last, utterly tired and worn out I fell down on the floor. My dream und vanished. Coming to my senses I found that this Puri of Jagannath was that Puri of Maya Devi." The pândâ could make nothing of what I said, and went away. Then came the stir and bustle of the *mahaprasad*,¹ over which there was much rejoicing. The *jamadars*, brahmins and servants all took the *mahaprasad* and began to put it into each other's mouth. Then there remained no distinction of Brahmin and Sudra. All ate together and rejoiced. Glory be to the Uriyas, in this matter they have won the palm, they have unified all castes.

From Puri I returned to Cuttack. On arriving there I learnt that our zemindari dewan Ramchandra Ganguli was dead. He was a near connection of Rammohun Roy, and a friend of his son Radhaprasad Roy. He was the first secretary of the Brâhma Samâj. Recognizing his capacity for business, my father had appointed him dewan of our whole estate, and up to now he had been managing zemindari affairs under our direction with great ability. Hearing of his death I hastened home from Cuttack in the month of Jaishttha, 1773, and began to make new arrangements for our zemindari.

¹ The consecrated food.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FAITH IN GOD'S PRESENCE—VIEWS ON ADWAITAVAD

In 1776 Girindranath died. He had conducted the affairs of the firm with great ability, so that his death created a vacancy not easy to be filled with regard to their management. By this time many debts had been cleared, many still remained. Certain creditors unable to brook further delay in payment had filed suits against us, and obtained decrees also. At this time after breakfast I used to spend the day in the Tatwoodhini Sabha's office on the second floor of the Brâhmin Samâj, looking after the Sabha's affairs. One day as I was going to the Sabhâ after breakfast my people said "Don't go to the Sabhâ to-day, there is fear of a warrant." Thinking this to be an idle caution, I went to the Sabha in spite of it, and sat there occupied in business. After some time, a Bengali clerk came up to me red in the face, and said in a low tone "Didn't I send word to you not to come here to-day, why did you come?" After which, pointing me out to the bailiff behind him he said, "This is Debendranath Tagore." The bailiff then showed me a warrant, and said "You must pay down Rs 14000 at once." I said "I have not Rs 14000 with me now." He said "Then come at once with me to the Sheriff." Telling him to wait a little I sent for a carriage. When it came the bailiff, an Englishman, took me in it to the Sheriff. Meanwhile great confusion arose in our house about my having been arrested under a warrant. Everybody kept saying they had all told me not to leave the house that day but I had not listened to them and had got myself arrested. It so happened that, that year our attorney Mr George was the sheriff. He made me sit down in his office and asked me why I had left the house that day. On the other hand my youngest brother Nagendranath went to Judge Colvin, who advised him to get me released on bail. Upon which Chandra Babu and others of my household stood bail for me and delivered me from the toils of the prison-

house On being informed of this my uncle Prasannakumar Tagore felt aggrieved and said. "Debendra never asks me anything, never tells me anything if he would only take my advice I could arrange all his debts for him" Hearing this I presented myself before him the next day He said to me "Look here, you needn't do anything else, only place all your Zemindari income in my hands, and I shall pay off your debts as they fall due, so that nobody will be able to worry you about them" I agreed gratefully to this proposal of his and thereafter used to make over to him the whole income of our Zemindari, while he undertook to clear off our debts Since then I used to go nearly every morning to Prasanna Kumar Tagore, show him the accounts, and talk over money matters Whenever I went, I used to see his favourite boon-companion Naba Banerjee by his side, with a white *morassa* turban on As the sheriff is to the Judge's Court, so was Naba Banerjee to his darbar In all matters he would take counsel with him Naba Banerjee was the only man he trusted One day in the presence of Prasanna Kumar Tagore, this Naba Banerjee said to me "The Tatwabodhini Patrika is an excellent paper I sit in Babu's library and read it, it imparts knowledge and arouses ones faculties, from it one gains wisdom" "Do you read the Tatwabodhini?" said I, "don't read it, don't read it" "Why?" asked Prasanna Kumar Tagore "what happens if you read the Tatwabodhini?" I said "Reading the Tatwabodhini brings one to such a plight as mine" He said "I say, Debendra has come out with a confession, he has made a real confession" saying which he broke into loud laughter "Well" said he to me "can you prove to me that God exists?" "Can you prove to me that wall is there?" I replied He laughed and said "Upon my word, what a question? I can see that the wall is there, what is there to prove?" I said "I see that God is everywhere, what is there to prove?" "As if God is the same as the wall" he answered "Ha ha, what is Debendra saying?" I said "God is something even nearer to me than this wall—he is within me, within my soul The sacred books speak ill of those who do not believe in God.* असुरान् प्रतिष्ठन्ते जगदाङ्कुरनीश्वर । The *asuras* cling to falsehood, they say there is no

God in this world" He said "But I revere this saying of the scriptures above all others अहं ईशो नमोऽस्मिन् निव्यक्तस्वमात्रवान् । I am the supreme deity, eternal free and self-existent I am none other ' If he had put forward some other proud claim such as ' आम्नोऽहं जगद्वालमि श्रीम्यसि सद्गुणी मया । " I am wealthy I am lord over many, who is there equal to me, —then there would have been some sense in his claim But that I myself am the supreme deity—such vaunting is the source of much evil, and strongly to be deprecated Bound as we are by a thousand worldly coils—steeped as we are in decay and sorrow, sin and evil—what is more strange than that we should consider ourselves eternal, free, and self-existent S'ankarâchârya has turned India's head by preaching the doctrine of Monism—the identity of God and man According to his teachings ascetics and men of the world both are repeating this senseless formula श्रीः—“I am that supreme deity.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BRAHMIC CREED.

On the 29th Pausa 1778, a general meeting of the Brâhma Samâj was held, at which Ramanath Tagore presided. At this time there were vacancies for two trustees in the Brahma Samaj, and the object of this meeting was to appoint these two trustees. According to the rules of the trust deed, only Prasanna Kumar Tagore had the power of appointing trustees. At his wish, and by common consent, Ramaprasad Roy and myself were appointed the two trustees for the Brâhma Samâj by the President that day.

ॐ In 1770 I had locked up the creed of the Brahma faith in a box. Taking it out thence a year afterwards, I was astonished to find that it was a worthy creed. I substituted the words “चनन्” and “सर्वशक्तिमत्” for “आनन्द” and “विचित्र शक्तिमत्” in the second article, and the word ‘गुप्त’ for “सुख” in the third article. At the end of the second article I added the words भूवं पूर्यैः प्रप्रतिमः। In the Tatwabodhini Patrika for the month of Agrahayan 1773, the fourth article, of the creed was published as the headline, तस्मिन् प्रीतिनस्य प्रियकार्यसाधनञ्च तदुपासनमेव। ‘To love him and to do his bidding is to worship him. From the month of Vaisakha 1779, the complete creed began to be published as the heading of the ‘Tatwabodhini Patrika. “ब्रह्म वा एकमिदमय आसीत् नान्यत् किञ्चनामी। तदिदं सर्वममृतम्। तदेव नित्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं शिवं स्वतन्त्रं निरवयवमैकमव्यतिथीयं सर्वत्रापि सर्वत्रियन् सर्वत्राय सर्वत्रिन् सर्वशक्तिसद्भुवं पूर्यैः प्रप्रतिममिति। एकस्य तस्यैवापासनया पारमार्थिकमैहिकञ्च शुभमभवति। तस्मिन् प्रीतिनस्य प्रियकार्यसाधनञ्च तदुपासनमेव।”

“In the beginning, there was only one supreme spirit, there was / nothing else, He created all this that is. He is infinite in wisdom and goodness, He is everlasting, all-knowing, all pervading, all-sustaining, formless, changeless, one only without a second, almighty, self-dependent and perfect there is none like unto Him. Our welfare here and hereafter consists only in worshipping Him. To love Him and to do His bidding is to worship Him.

After the publication of this creed I found that all Brahmos assented to it thoroughly, and all were satisfied with it. Up to this time nobody has objected to it. Although the Brâhma Samâj has been variously split up, yet by the grace of God this creed still remains the one common ground of all Brahmos. So much so that, on the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Brâhma Samâj, a devout and thoughtful Brâhma, in the course of his sermon, said in praise of this creed. "As long as truth is esteemed in this world, as long as King conscience sits enthroned in the hearts of men so long there is no doubt that it will embellish the nature of man."



Nagendra Nath Tagore (Page 103)

CHAPTER XXX

RENUNCIATION

At last in these ten years, our debts had mostly been paid off. The heavy load of my paternal debts had been a good deal lightened. But another new kind of burden of misfortune and debts began to weigh me down. When Girindranath was alive, he had incurred heavy debts for his own expenses. I had cleared some of these, along with my paternal liabilities. Now again Nagendranath began to involve himself deeply in debt on account of his personal expenses. And not only for that reason, but to help another he would borrow even Rs 10000—so kindly and sympathetic a disposition had he.

His liberality and his amiable manners attracted people greatly. One day one of his creditors had spoken sharp words to him about his dues, so he came to me with tears in his eyes, and said, "My creditor insists on having your signature along with mine on the hand-note I have given him." I said to him, "I can give you all I have, but I cannot sign any note or bond. As it is I cannot clear off the debts we have already, how then can I bind myself down for these fresh debts of yours? I will not again knowingly plunge into the sinful mire of debt." On hearing me speak thus he leant against a wall, and wept for three hours. His weeping made my heart break, but I could not sign his note. I said to him, "You may take all the money that we shall get by leasing our silk factory of Galimpur, and by selling all our books—I freely give that to you, but I cannot sign a note of hand against my conscience, without knowing how to repay the money." He was greatly grieved and offended. Saying that his elder brother would not help him, he left our house in a huff, and went to stay in the house of my youngest uncle, Ramanath Tagore. After this I had to sign a note of Rs 8000 for him, and he promised that he would pay off the money by the sale of all the books we possessed, and that I should not be put to any trouble about it in future. But even then Nagendranath did not

come home, and continued to live in our uncle's house. All these events crushed my spirit entirely. I thought that if I stayed at home I would have to suffer various annoyances like these, and gradually get involved again in a network of debt, so I too had better leave home and never come back. Then again, Akshay Kumar Dutta started a Friends' society, in which the nature of God was decided upon by show of hands. For instance, somebody said "Is God the personification of bliss or not?" Those who believed in his blissfulness held up their hands. Thus the truth or otherwise of God's attributes was decided by the majority of votes. Amongst many of those who formed part of me, who surrounded me, I could no longer see any signs of religious feeling or piety,—each only pitted his own intellect and power against the others. Nowhere did I obtain a sympathetic response. My antipathy and indifference to the world grew apace. This profited me greatly in one respect, inasmuch as I became eager to descend into the deeper recesses of my soul in search of the Supreme Soul. I began to enquire into first principles. I resolved to realise in my life by discovering their inner meaning, and to test by the light of reason, those truths that had come floating to me on the waves of spiritual emotion, by the grace of God.

عیانِ ہند کہ چرا آمدیم کہا نردم
دردِ درج کہ عاقل ر کارِ حوسنم

"It is not yet revealed where I was, why I came here. What I regret and grieve for is that I remain oblivious of my own duties. Where I was, why I came here, where I shall go again, all this has not yet been revealed to me. I have not yet attained as much knowledge of God as is possible here. No longer will I join the frivolous throng, or waste my time in idle talk. I shall concentrate my mind, and practise severe austerities in retirement for His sake. I shall leave my home, never to return. Shrimat Shankaracharya teaches me thus. 'कस्य त्वं वा कुत आयातः । तत् तदिदं विनिय भाव ।' Whose art thou, and whence art thou come, meditate on this truth, O brother. At this time, in the month of Shravan 1778, I was staying at Gopallal Tagore's

garden-house in Baranagore. Here I used to read Shrimatbhagavat. As I was reading it, I was struck with this verse.

“आमयीयश्च भूतानां जायते येन सुव्रत ।

तदेव ह्यामयं द्रव्यं न पुनाति चिकित्सितं ।

O Suvrata, the malady that is engendered in human beings by certain things, can never be cured in them by those selfsame things.” I had fallen into this great trouble by staying in the world, so the world cannot save me from this trouble. Therefore fly hence. In the evening I used to sit with my friends in the garden on the banks of the Ganges. The thick clouds of the rainy season used to flit over my head through the sky. These dark-blue clouds brought great joy and peace to my mind at the time. I thought to myself, how free to roam are these, how easily they go hither and thither at their own sweet will. How glad I should be if I could roam as freely as they, and wander about whithersoever I listed. In the Chhandogya Upanishad I found “य इहार्मानमनुविद्य ब्रजन्त्येताश्च सत्यान् कामाक्षेवा सर्वेषु लोकेषु कामचारीभवति । Those who wander here now, knowing the soul and all these true desires, they become free to roam hereafter in all the worlds, and can pass freely from one world to another.” This appeared to me eminently enviable. I thought to myself I shall go hence and wander about everywhere. Again I saw in the commentary of the Svetasvatara Upanishad, ‘न धनेन न प्रजया न कर्मणा त्यागेनैकेनामृतत्वमानुषः ।’ Not through riches, not through progeny, not through works, but through renunciation alone is that immortality to be attained. Then the world could hold back my mind no longer, and I broke loose from its delusive coils. I began looking forward to the advent of the month of Aświn, when I would fly hence, wander about in all places, and never return.

ترا ر کنگز عرش مبرند صعد

ندامت که درس دامگه چه افتاد است

“The call has come from the Seventh-heaven—who knows what work of Thine has been impeded by reason of my foolish pursuits in this world.”

CHAPTER XXXI

TRAVELS

The month of Aswin, for which I had been waiting, had now arrived. I hired a boat for Rs 100 to go to Benares. At 11 a.m. on the 19th Aswin 1778, the tide of the Ganges set in, and a new wave of enthusiasm surged in my breast also. I got into the boat. The anchor was weighed, the boat started, and looking up to God I said :

کستی بستگایم ای باد سرطه درخیز
باشد که بار بدم دسار آشنا را

“We are now sitting in the boat, arise, O favorable wind ! Perhaps we shall again see that friend of ours so well worth seeing.” Going against the current of the Ganges in Aswin, it took us six days to reach Navadvīpa. We spent the night moored to a sandbank in the Ganges. All around were its waters, and in the middle floated this islet. On account of the high wind and rain we were unable to leave its shores for two days. On the 16th of Kartik we reached Monghyr. At 4 o'clock in the morning I started thence to see Sitakunda, and arrived there at sunrise, after walking six miles from the boat. The water of the spring is so hot that one can't put one's hand in it. There is a railing all round. On asking the reason the people of the place said, “The pilgrims sometimes jump into it, so this railing has been put up by order of the Magistrate. After seeing this I again walked those six miles, and came back to the boat hungry, thirsty and tired. ‘परिव्रान्तेन्द्रियात्माऽत्र दृष्ट परीते प्रमुच्यते।’” Afterwards, as we were passing through the middle of the broad expanse of the Ganges at Fatua, a strong gale arose. The boat was hurriedly rowed towards land. But though it put to shore, it was repeatedly knocked against the high banks by the violent squall. Seeing it was about to split, and could not be saved, I left the quivering boat and stood on the shore. But though the solid ground was under my feet there, the storm disturbed me

sorely, the sand pelted and pierced my body like shot. Wrapping a thick sheet round me, I stood on shore and felt the glory of that "महद्भय बज्रमुद्यतं" supreme deity, in the wild and fierce appearance of the river. The small boat that followed us sank with all our provisions. Afterwards we procured fresh supplies on arriving at Patna. There the current proved so strong, that the boat could hardly move. Fighting against this tremendous current, we passed Patna and reached Benares on the 6th Agra-hayan. It had taken us nearly a month and a half to get to Benares from Calcutta. Early in the morning, taking all my things from the boat, I went in the direction of Sikrole, looking about me for lodgings, or some place to stay in. After going some distance, I saw an empty dilapidated house standing in the midst of a garden. Some hermits were sitting there by the side of a well, talking. I thought to myself this house must be a public place where anybody can stay, so I established myself there with all my belongings. The next day Gurudas Mitra, son of the well known Rajendra Mitra of Benares, came to see me. I wondered how he had come to know of my arrival here. I rose quickly, and cordially seated him by my side. He said, "You have done us honour by having chosen to stay in this house of ours. This house has neither doors, nor curtains, nor any protection, and the night-air is cold. You must have passed the night in great discomfort. If I had known before that you were coming here, we should have had everything ready." He was very civil and kind, and insisted on making the place habitable. I stayed ten days in Benares,—and was quite comfortable. On the 17th Agra-hayan I left Benares in a stage coach. I sent home most of my servants and only took two of them with me on the top of the carriage. These two were Kishorinath Chatterjee and a milkman of Krishnagar. The next evening, on reaching the right bank of Allahabad, I had my carriage hoisted upon a ferry-boat, for fear I should not get one early in the morning. I slept that night on the boat inside the carriage. Next morning the ferry-boat moved along leisurely, and reached the opposite bank at noon. On the sands underneath the Fort I saw several small flags flying; the *pandas* earn money by saying that these flags are hoisted in the heavenland

of the pilgrim's fathers This is the holy land of Prayag, this is the famous Benī-ghat. At this spot on the riverside, people shave their heads, and give offerings on land and water to their ancestors, and distribute alms As soon as my boat touched the shore, there was a regular invasion of *pandas*, who boarded it One of them laid hands on me saying, "Come and bathe here and shave your head" I said, "I have not come as a pilgrim, nor will I shave my head" "Pilgrim or not, give me some money" said another "I shall give you nothing" I replied, "you are able to work, and earn your bread" He said in Hindi "I won't let you go without giving me money, you must give me something" I replied in the same language "I shan't give you money, let's see how you take it from me" Upon this he jumped from the boat on to land, and laying hold of the tow rope, began to pull away hard with the others after pulling for some time he ran up to me in the boat, and said "Now I have done some work, give me money." I laughed and gave him some money, saying "That's right." It was past midday, when with some difficulty we reached the ferry on the left bank of the Ganges Then, after going four miles, we found a bungalow, and rested there After leaving Allahabad, I reached Agra on the 22nd Agrahayan My stage-coach used to travel day and night, in the middle of the day we would cook and eat our meal under a tree At Agra I saw the Taj This Taj is the taj (crown) of the world Ascending a minaret, I saw the sun setting in the western horizon, making it one mass of red Beneath was the blue Jumna The pure white Taj in the midst, with its halo of beauty, seemed to have dropped on the earth from the moon I started for Dehli on the 26th inst. by river In the cold of Pausa I sometimes bathed in the Jumna, and the blood froze in my veins The boat went its way, but I used to walk along the banks of the Jumna through the cornfields and villages and gardens, enjoying the beauty of nature This filled my mind with great peace In eleven days I reached the city of Mathura on the banks of the Jumna, and went immediately to see the town There is a rest-house for hermits on the banks of the river From it one of them called out to me in Hindi "Come here and let us discuss the holy scriptures" I was eager to see Mathura

at once, so I passed on then without giving him any answer. On my way back I went to him. He brought out some manuscripts from his collection. I saw they were all Hindi translations of Rammohun Roy's works. He began to recite the hymn of praise to Brahma "*Namaste sate*" contained in the Mahanirvan Tantra. I found that our religious tenets were very much alike. I was surprised to meet a person like this on the roadside. I asked him to my boat, where he came and had his meal with me too, only I had to give him a little "*kāṛan*". Whilst drinking this wine he repeated "अलिना विद्मन्त्रेण निमीडि कुलमुद्धरत्" "he who drinks a drop of wine saves thirty million generations of ancestors. He said 'I have practised the rites with dead bodies.' He was a regular Tantrik. He slept that night in my budgerow, and rising early in the morning began muttering all sorts of things, and only went away after bathing in the Jumna. After this I arrived at Brindāban. There I went to see the temple of Govindji, the famous fruit of Lala Babu's munificence. Four or five men were seated in the high music-chamber attached to the temple, listening to the *señā*. They were rather startled to see that I did not bow down to Govindji. A month after leaving Agra, my budgerow touched the sands of Dehli on the 27th Pausa. I saw a great crowd collected everhead. The Badshah of Dehli was flying kites there. There was nothing else to occupy him now, what was he to do? Going into the town of Dehli, I rented a house in the bazar. Nagendranath had come there to take me back home. I was staying over the bazar on the high road in Delhi town, but he had been unable to find me, and had gone back home disappointed. I heard of this afterwards. Here I met Sukhananda Swami, a Tantrik Brahma worshipper, disciple of Hariharananda Tirthaswami. Rammohun Roy was a great friend of this Hariharananda, who used to stay in his garden-house, and whose youngest brother was Ramchandra Vidyāvāgish. As soon as I arrived in Dehli, Sukhananda Swami sent me some grapes and other delicacies. I also sent him presents and went to see him. He in his turn came to visit me, and thus I came to meet and know him. Sukhānanda Swami said "I and Rammohan Roy are both disciples of Hariharānanda Tirthaswami, Rammohan Roy

was a Tantrik like myself " All the different religious sects claim Rammohun Roy for their own The famous Kutab Minar is sixteen miles from here I went to see it This is a glorious work of the ancient Hindus The Mussalmans now say it is the pillar of victory of the Badshah Kutabuddin, hence it is called Kutab Minar As the Mussulmans have defeated the Hindus, so also have they destroyed their name and fame Minar means a high column-like palace-tower The Kutab Minar is nearly 161 cubits high Ascending the topmost turret of the Minar, I was enraptured to see the marvellous vast plains beneath the semi-circular horizon, proclaiming the glory of the Most High From here I went in a stage-coach to Umballa Here I took a dooly and went to Lahore, taking only Kishorinath with me Returning from Lahore I reached Amritsar on the 4th Falgoon. It was then very cold there

CHAPTER XXXII

AMRITSAR

Although I had come to Amritsar yet my heart was set on that Amritsar, that lake of immortality, where the Sikhs worship the Alakh Niranján or Inscrutable Immortal One. Quite early in the morning, I hurried through the town to see that holy shrine of Amritsar. After wandering through several streets, I at last asked a passer-by where Amritsar was. He stared at me in surprise and said, "Why, this is Amritsar." "No," said I, "where is that Amritsar where God is worshipped with sacred chanting?" He replied "The Gurudwara," oh, that is quite near, go this way." Taking the road indicated, and going past the bazaar of red-cloth shawls and scarves, I saw the golden spire of the temple shining in the morning sun. Keeping this in view, I arrived at the temple, and saw a big tank, four or five times the size of the Laldighi in Calcutta. This was the lake. It is replenished by the waters of the river Irrawady, flowing through the canal of Madhavapur. Guru Ramdas had this fine tank dug here, and called it Amritsar. Formerly it was called "Chak." Like an islet in the midst of the lake, there is a white marble temple, which I entered by passing over a bridge. In front there was a huge pile of books covered over with a particolored silk cloth. One of the chief Sikhs of the temple was waving a plume over it. On one side, singers were chanting from the sacred books. Punjabi men and women came and walked round the temple, and having made their salutations with offerings of shells and flowers, went away,—some stayed and sang with devotion. Here all may come and go when they please—nobody asks them to come, nobody tells them not to. Christians and Mahomedans, all may come here, only according to the rules none may enter the bounds of the Gurudwara with shoes on. All the Sikhs felt deeply humiliated and aggrieved by this rule being transgressed by the Governor-General, Lord Lytton. I again went to the temple in the evening, and saw that the *arati* or vesper ceremony was being performed. A Sikh was standing in

front of the Books, with five-wick lamp in hand, performing the *arati*. All the other Sikhs stood with joined hands, repeating with him in solemn tones

“गङ्गानदी यासु रवि अन्द्र दीपक बने,
तारका मण्डली जाँका सीती ।
धूप मलयामिखी पवन चनरी करे,
सकल वनराजि फुलन अति ।
कौसी आरति द्विधि समस्तहुना, तैरि आरति,
अगाहता अष्ट वाजन्त मरी ।

हरिहरचमल-मकरन्द-सीमितमनोऽनुदिनी के आयी धियासा,
कृपा-जल दे नानक-सारङ्गकी याने द्विधि तैरे नाने बासा ।’

In the disc of the sky,
The sun and moon shine as lamps,
The galaxy of stars twinkle like pearls
The zephyr is incense, the winds are fanning,
All the woods are bright with flowers
Oh saviour of the world Thine *arati*
Is wonderful indeed ! Loud sounds the drum,
And yet no hand doth beat

My soul is ever panting and athirst
For the honey of Hari's lotus feet,
Give the waters of thy mercy to the *chatak** Nanak,
So that I may dwell in thy name.

At the close of the *arati*, *kada bhog* (a kind of sweetmeat) was distributed to all. The worship of God is carried on thus in the temple night and day for 24 hours, prayers being suspended for the last three hours of the night in order to cleanse the temple. In the

* The *chatak* is a bird said to drink no other water but rain.

नदेष्वपि ऋदेष्वपि पिबन्त्यन्वे सदा पय ।

आप्तकस्य तु त्रीमुत भवानेवात्रलब्धम् ॥

From lake and stream all other creatures drink their fill,
The *Chatak* bird, O cloud, depends upon thy will.

Brahma Samaj, we have prayers for two hours in the week only. And in the Sikh temple of Hari, there is worship night and day. If anyone feels restless and distressed, he can go there even at night, and pray and find peace. This good example should be followed by the Brahmos. The Sikhs have no *Guru* or spiritual preceptor now. Their books occupy his place. Their tenth and last *Guru* was Guru Govinda. It was he that broke up the caste system of the Sikhs, and introduced the custom of initiation amongst them which goes by the name of 'Pahal,' and is still in existence. He who wants to become a Sikh must first perform the *pahal*. This custom is as follows,—Sugar is thrown into a vessel filled with water, which is then stirred with a sword or knife, and sprinkled on those who are to become Sikhs. They all then drink this sugared water out of the same cup. Brahman, Kshatriya and Sudra, all may become Sikhs without distinction of caste. Mahomedans also can become Sikhs. Whoever becomes a Sikh is given the surname of Singh. There is no image in this temple of the Sikhs. Nanak has said "*Thapā na jai, kīta na hor, dī āpa nūanjana sor*. He cannot be placed anywhere, none can make Him, He is that self-existent stainless one.' But strange to say, having received these noble teachings of Nanak,—and worshipping as they do the formless Brahma,—the Sikhs have yet founded a temple of Shiva within the precincts of the Gurudwara. They also believe in the goddess Kali. It is no easy matter for anybody to keep this Brahmic vow,—'I shall not worship any created thing, thinking it to be the supreme Deity.' A great festival takes place in this temple during the Holi*. The Sikhs then give themselves up to drink. They take liquor, but do not smoke, do not even touch the *hookah* or *chillum*. Many Sikhs used to come to my rooms, and I used to learn the Gurumukhi language and their religious doctrines from them. I did not find much religious zeal amongst them. I met one zealous Sikh, who said to me "If one died weeping, without having tasted the immortal nectar, what then?" I said weeping and mourning for him would not be in vain.

* Vaishnava Spring Festival.

“ The lodgings I had found near Rambagan in Amritsar, were not in very good condition. The house was dilapidated, the garden was in ruins, the trees grew in wild disorder. But to my fresh eyes and fresh ardour, everything appeared fresh and new and beautiful. When I walked in the garden at sunrise, when the white, yellow and red poppies shed tears of dew, when the gold and silver flowers in the grass spread a carpet of gilded embroidery over the garden-land, when the winds of heaven came laden with honey to the garden, when the sweet echoes of Punjabi songs were wafted to the garden from afar,—it seemed to me like some fairyland of old. Some days the peacocks and peahens would come from the woods and sit on my terrace-floor, their long variegated tails drooping to the ground and colored with sunlight. Sometimes they would get down from the terrace and feed in the garden. I used to take some rice in my hand and go up to them fondly to feed them, but they would get frightened and fly away none knew whither, uttering their shrill cries. One day somebody warned me, saying “Dont do that, they are very wicked. If they peck at all, they will peck at your eyes.” On a cloudy day I saw the peacocks dancing, with wings raised above their heads. What a wonderful sight! If I could play the *vina* I would have done so, in time to their dancing. I found that the poets were quite right in saying that peacocks begin to dance with delight as soon as the clouds gather, “*nrityanti s'ikhhi-nomudā*” This is not only a fancy of theirs. The month of Falgun passed away, and with the advent of the honey-month of Chaitra, the gates of spring were unbarred, and the south wind took advantage of this opportunity to mix the scent of the freshly-opened orange-blossoms with the scent of the mango-blossoms, and enliven the whole atmosphere with a wave of soft perfume. This is the breath of Him the Merciful. On the last day of Chaitra, I saw that the fairies had come, whence I know not, to the pond near my house, and were playing about in the water like swans, with cries of delight. Thus the stream of time flowed swiftly and happily on. The month of Vṛṣaka arrived. Then I began to feel the heat of the sun. From the second floor, where I was staying, I came down to the first floor. But in a short time the heat penetrated there also. I

said to the landlord, I can stay here no longer, it is getting hotter and hotter, I shall go away from here. He said "There is an underground room; it is very pleasant there in the hot weather." I had not been aware till then of the existence of a room under the ground. He took me down there, where there was a room exactly like the one above it on the first floor. Air and light entered from one side, and the room was quite cool. But I did not care about saying in it I could not remain like a prisoner in a room underneath the ground. I want the open air, and a spacious room. A Sikh said to me "Then go to the Simla Hills,—that is a very cool place." Thinking this would be to my liking, I left for Simla on the 9th Vyśikha, 1779. After three days' journey, leaving Tanjaur behind, I arrived in the valley of Kalka on the 12th Vyshakha. In front I saw the mountains barring the way. Their strange and charming scenery was displayed before me. I thought to myself with delight that to-morrow I shall ascend these, and leaving the earth, shall place my foot on the first step of Heaven. In this delightful mood I passed that night, slept happily, and got rid of the fatigue of the journey.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SIMLA.

But half the month of Vyshakha had passed away, when I took a *ghampan* on the morning of the 16th, and began winding my way up the hills. The higher I climbed, the higher did my mind become. After ascending for some time, I saw that they were descending again with me. I want to rise higher still and higher, why then do these men take me down, thought I. The *ghampanis* took me down the *khud* altogether, and put me down near a river. In front there was a higher hill, at the foot of which ran this little stream. It was then midday. The base of the hills was so heated by the fierce sun, that I felt very uneasy. The heat of the plains can be borne, but this heat was unbearable to me. There was a small grocer's shop here, where there was parched Indian corn for sale. It seemed to me that the corn must have got roasted by this hot sun. We cooked and ate our food by the river. Crossing the stream, we then began ascending the hill in front, and reached cooler regions. We spent the night at a place called Haripur. Beginning to travel next morning we had our meals under a tree at noon, and arrived at the bazaar of Simla in the evening. My *ghampan* remained in the bazaar, and the shopkeepers stared at me. I got out of the *ghampan* and began to look at the things in their shops. My companion Kishornath Chatterjee went to look for lodgings, and after arranging some rooms in a very poor place soon came and took me there. Here another year passed away. Several Bengalis were employed there, many of whom came to see me. Peary Mohun Banerji came to enquire after me every day. He was employed in an English shop there. One day he said to me, "There is a very beautiful waterfall here, which I can take you to see if you care to go." I went down the *khud* with him to see it. In the course of descent I saw there were human habitations here, interspersed with grain-fields. Here cows and buffaloes were grazing, there hill-women were threshing paddy,—I was surprised to see this. This was the first time I

came to know that there were villages and fields here as in our country. Thus looking about us, we reached the lowest part of the *khud*, and had our *jhampons* set down, as they could go no further. Taking our mountain-sticks in hand now, we came slowly down to the waterfall below the rocks. Here the water was falling from a height of 300 cubits, and foaming profusely at the obstruction offered by the stones, and the current was flowing swiftly downwards. I sat on a stone, and watched this play of water. As the cool spray of the waterfall touched my body, perspiring from the exertion of descending the *khud*,—I felt everything grow dark, and slowly lay down on the rock, senseless. Shortly afterwards I came to myself and opened my eyes. I saw my friend Pearymohun Banerjee's face was quite pale, and he was gazing at me sorrowfully, not knowing what to do. I at once recalled our situation to mind, and laughed to give him courage. After thus seeing the waterfall, I came back to my lodgings. The Sunday after that some of us again went to the banks of that waterfall for a picnic. I went and stood inside the falls, and the water fell on to my head from a height of 300 cubits. I stood there for five minutes, and the icy spray of water entered my body through every pore. Then I came out. But I thought it was great fun, and went in again. So that I had my bath in the waterfall. We had a most enjoyable picnic in the mountain woods, and returned to our lodgings in the evening. There had been something wrong with my left eye before, and the next morning I found it was red and swollen. I cured my eye-disease by fasting. On the 3rd of Jaistha, after getting rid of this indisposition, the vigour of health made me feel very happy in body and mind. Pacing to and fro in the open rooms, I was thinking that I could pass my whole life happily in this Simla house. At this juncture I saw some people running in the road below my rooms. Seeing this I asked them, what is the matter? why are you running so hard? But without replying, one of them waved his hand to me as much as to say "Fly fly." I asked, why should I fly? But there was none to answer, all were anxious for the safety of their own lives. Unable to understand what was up, I went to Pyari Babu for information. I saw that he had made a big mark on his forehead.

with plaster from the wall, and having brought the sacred thread out from his neck, was wearing it over his *chapkan*. His eyes were red and his face downcast. As soon as he saw me he said "The Gurkhas respect Brahmins." "What is the matter?" I asked. He replied "The Gurkha soldiers are coming to pillage Simla. I have decided to go down the *khud*." "Then I shall go with you too," I said. This made him pull a longer face. His idea was to seek refuge in the *khud* alone—if both of us went together, it would make the hillmen more covetous, and put our lives in danger. Guessing what was passing in his mind, I said, "No, I shall not go down the *khud*." I returned to my lodgings, where I found the door locked. Being unable to enter, I began to walk up and down the road. Soon after Kishori came and said "I have buried the money-bag in the ground near the oven, and heaped firewood on it, and I have locked the Gurkha servant inside the room, the Gurkhas will do no harm to a Gurkha." "That is all right," I said "but what are you doing to save your own life?" He replied "I will get into this ditch by the roadside when the Gurkhas come, so that no one will see me." I went up an ascent to see whether the Gurkhas were really coming or not, but could see nothing from there. A notice had been given to the effect that should the Gurkhas come to attack Simla, guns would be fired to warn everybody. Shortly after I heard the sound of heavy gunfire. Then surrendering myself to God, I began to pace the road. Night fell, yet there was no disturbance, I went home and slept peacefully. On waking in the morning I found that I was alive, and the Gurkhas had not come to attack us. On going outside I found armed Gurkhas posted at the Government Treasury and other offices, and in the streets.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THREATENED ATTACK BY GURKHAS

On the 1st. day of Jaishtha news came to Simla, that owing to the mutiny of the sepoy, a terrible massacre had taken place at Delhi and Meerut. On the 2nd Jaishtha, the Commander-in-chief General Arson, after having clean-shaved himself, mounted a country pony and rode up to Simla. There was a Gurkha regiment stationed very close to Simla, and on his way he ordered their captain to disarm them. The Gurkhas were innocent, and had no connection whatever with the sepoy. The sahibs imagined that black sepoy were all one, and thoughtlessly ordered the Gurkhas to be disarmed. As soon as the captain ordered the Gurkhas to lay down their arms, they thought themselves insulted and dishonoured. They thought they were going to be disarmed first and then blown to pieces by cannon, and with this idea they all became united in thought and deed, for fear of their lives. They disobeyed the captain, and did not lay down their guns. Moreover they secured and bound the English officers, and came to attack Simla on the 3rd Jaishtha. At this news the Bengalis of Simla began to fly with their families in fear and terror. The Mussalmans of the place thought that they were going to regain their supremacy. A tall white Irani with a huge beard came from somewhere or other, and in order to please me said "They have made the Mussulmans eat pork and the Hindus eat cows,—we shall see now what becomes of the Feringhees." A Bengali came up to me and said "You were safe and sound at home, why did you come here amidst all this disturbance. We have never seen such a disturbance before." I said "I am alone, there is no fear for me. But those who are here with their families,—it is for them I am anxious. Their danger is great." The Englishmen of the place, in order to defend Simla, assembled on a high hill with their ladies, and guarded it all round. But instead of looking to their guns, they gave themselves up to drinking, merry-making, shouting and boasting up there. It was Lord Hay, the cool-headed and able Commissioner of the

place, who saved Simla. When the gunfire announced the arrival of the Gurkha troops in Simla, he, dismissing all fear for his own life, appeared hat in hand salaaming before that body of soldiers, who were like a herd of wild elephants without a driver,—appeased them with soft words of assurance, and put them in charge of the Treasury and other offices with a trustful heart. The sahibs were highly indignant with Lord Hay for this, and said “Lord Hay has not acted wisely, he has placed our lives and property and honour all at the mercy of our rebellious enemies, and has cast a slur on the British name by showing such weakness to them. If he had left it to us, we would have driven them away.” A Bengali came and said to me “Sir, though the Gurkhas have got all their rights, yet they are not appeased. They are abusing the English right and left.” I said “They have no shepherd, they are soldiers without a captain, let them rave, they will soon cool down.” But the sahibs were quite overcome with fear, and in their despair they determined that, since the Gurkhas had occupied Simla, flight was the only means of saving their lives, and to this end they began flying from Simla. At midday I saw many Englishmen running in terror down the *khud* without *ghampan* or *dandi* or horse, or escort of any kind. Who was there to help or look after anyone else? All were taken up with their own safety. By evening Simla was quite deserted. That Simla which had been full of the sounds of men, now became silent and still. Its broad sky was filled only with the cawing of crows. Since Simla had become empty of human beings, I too would have to go perforce to-day. Even if the Gurkhas did not molest us, yet the hillmen might come up from the *khud*, and rob us of everything. But where could bearers be found that day? I was not so frightened as to be compelled to fly on foot from Simla, if no bearers were to be had. At this juncture a dark tall man with red eyes came up to me, and said “Do you want coolies?” I said “Yes I do.” “How many?” “I want twenty.” “Very well, I shall bring them, you must give me *backsheesh*,” saying which he went away. In the meantime I engaged a *dooly* for myself. After dinner I lay down in an anxious frame of mind. It was midnight when I heard cries of “Open the door,

open the door" accompanied by banging at the door. They made a great noise. My heart began to beat fast,—I was seized with a great fear—perhaps the Gurkhas would take my life now. I opened the door in trepidation, and saw that the tall dark man had come with twenty coolies, and was shouting for us. I was freed from all anxiety for my life. They slept in my room the whole night as my guard. God's mercy towards me was made plainly manifest. Day broke, and I made ready to leave Simla. The coolies said they wouldn't go unless they got money in advance. In order to pay them I began calling out 'Kishori, Kishori, but where was Kishori?' The money for daily expenses was with him, and I had a box full of money with me. I had thought I would not show such a lot of money to the coolies. But there was no Kishori, and the coolies would not move without money. So I opened the box there and gave Rs 3 to each, and Rs 5 to the headman. At this moment Kishori turned up. 'Where had you gone away at such a time of danger?' I asked. He said 'A tailor wanted 4 as too much for making my clothes, so it took a long time to settle with him. I got into that *dooly* and proceeded to another hill called Dagshahi. After travelling the whole day, the coolies set me down in the evening near a waterfall, while they drank water and began to talk and laugh amongst themselves. Not being able to understand a word of their speech, I thought that perhaps they were conspiring to kill me and take all that money. If they were to throw me down the *khad* from this lonely forest, nobody would know. This proved however to be only a false alarm of my own imagining. Having drunk water and regained strength, they put me down in a bazaar at midnight, after passing the night there. I again went on. Some loose silver and copper coin had fallen from my pocket and become scattered on the bed, which the coolies picked up and brought to me. This inspired me with the greatest confidence in them. At noon I reached Dagshahi. They put me down by a tiled hut, and went away. Kishori came up to where I was, in the evening. I got a tumbledown room to stay in, and a rope stretcher to lie down on. In this I passed the night. Then in the morning I rose and went to the top of the hill. There I found that the English soldiers had

made a circular fort, by placing empty wine-boxes all round. A flag was flying from it, and a soldier was standing below, drawn sword in hand. Quietly scaling that wall of boxes, I entered the fort and went up to the soldier in some fear, thinking that he might perhaps use his sword on me. But he asked me in a very sad and dejected manner "Are the Gurkhas coming here?" "No, they have not yet come here" I replied. I came out from there and found a small cave, inside which I sat in the shade. In the evening I came down to the foot of the hill, and slept in that room. It rained a little that night, and the room was no shelter at all. Water fell through the broken roof. Thus the days and nights wore on in my forest exile. Two Bengalis, a Ghose and a Bose, were employed in the post-office here, after their return from the Kabul War. They came to see me. Bose said, "I narrowly escaped with my life, on my way back from the Kabul War. In the course of my flight I saw an empty house on the road to Kabul, entering which I hid myself on the top of a sort of loft. The Kabulis found me out there, and very nearly killed me. I managed to come away alive with the greatest difficulty. Here again comes this fresh trouble." As long as I stayed there, Ghose used to come and make enquiries every day. One day I asked "Well Ghose, what news to-day?" "Not very good news" he replied, "They have set fire to the mails." Next day I asked, "What news to-day Ghose?" He said "To-day the news is not very good. The rebels must be coming to-day from Jullundur." One never got good news from Ghose. Every day he would come with a long face. I spent eleven days in this way, in great anxiety. Then news came that Simla was safe, and there was no longer any fear.

I began to make preparations for going to Simla. On sending for coolies, I was told there were none to be had. They had decamped for fear of cholera. I got a horse, on which I mounted and started in the afternoon. After coming a short way, I stayed the night at a halting-station, and rode on again the next morning. Kishori was not with me. The heat of the sun in that month of 'Jaistha' was very fierce on the bare hills. I longed for a little shade, but there was not a single tree to give it me. My throat was parched

with thirst, but there was not a soul near to hold my horse for a minute. After going on in this state till midday, I came to a bungalow. Tying up the horse near by, I went in there to rest. I was asking for a little water, when a runaway lady whom chance had brought there, moved by fellow-feeling in adversity, sent me some butter and hot potatoes and a little water, by partaking of which I allayed my hunger and thirst, and revived. I reached Simla in the evening. Standing in front of the door I called out "Kishori, where are you ? are you there ?" and Kishori came and opened the door. I returned to Simla from Dagshahi on the 18th day of Jaishtha.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A JOURNEY FURTHER NORTH.

On my return to Simla I said to Kishorinath Chatterjee, " Within week I shall travel further north towards the higher ranges. You must accompany me. Order a *jhampan* for me and a horse for yourself." "Very well sir," he replied, and set about making the necessary arrangements. The 25th *Faushla* was the date fixed for our departure from Simla. I got up very early that morning and made ready to start. My *jhampan* was at the door, and the coolies all present. "Where is your horse?" I asked Kishori. "It'll be here just now, it'll be here just now," he kept on saying looking anxiously towards the road. An hour passed, and yet no sign of his horse. I could not stand this delay and hindrance in my journey any longer. I saw that Kishori was unwilling to go further north with me for fear of the great cold. I said to him "You think I shan't be able to go on my travels alone, if you don't accompany me. I don't want you, you can stay here. Give me the keys of my boxes and trunk." Taking the keys from him I went and sat in the *jhampan*, and said "Take up the *jhampan*." The *jhampan* was raised the coolies carried my luggage along, and the bewildered Kishori stood there dumb-founded. With feelings of delight and enthusiasm I passed through the bazaar, looking about me, and left Simla behind. On arriving at a certain hill, after travelling two hours, I found that the bridge leading to the neighbouring hill was broken, there was no further roadway. The *jhampanis* put down the *jhampan*. Must I then go back from this point? The *jhampanis* said "If you can cross the bridge by walking along the broken edge, we can go down the *khud* with the empty *jhampan* and catch you up on the other side." I was so full of ardour then, that I nerved myself to carry out this proposal. There was just room for placing one foot on the ledge, but no support for the hands on either side, and a terribly deep *khud* below, which by the grace of God I crossed over safely. By God's grace verily "the cripple can cross mountains."

and I was not thwarted in my determination to travel. Thence I began to ascend the mountain gradually. It rose up quite straight like a wall to such a height, that from there even the *kelu* trees in the *khud* below appeared like small shrubs. Close by there was a village, from which some tigerish dogs ran out barking. In front the stark steep hill, below the awful *khud*, overhead the threatening dogs. In fear and trepidation I traversed this dangerous road. After mid-day, on arriving at an empty traveller's bungalow, we stopped for the day. I had no cook with me. The *shampanis* said "Our bread is very sweet." I took one of their cakes made of Indian corn and oats. A portion of that was my meal for the day, and was quite enough for me. "*Rukhā sukhā gumkī tukrā lonā ba alond kyā, ser diya to ronā kyā*" After a little while some hill-people came up to me from the village hard by, and began to dance about in great glee with various contortions of the body. I noticed that one of them had no nose, his face was quite flat. "What's the matter with your face?" I asked. He said "A bear slapped me on the face," and pointing to a road in front of me, "the bear came that way, and as I went for him, he took off my nose with his paws." How he danced, and how he enjoyed himself with that broken face! I was greatly pleased with the simple nature of these hill-people. Leaving this place the next morning, I reached a hill-top in the afternoon, and stayed there. A lot of village people came and sat round me. They said "Our life here is a very hard one. When it snows, we have to wade knee-deep through the snow at all times, and during harvest-time boars and bears come and spoil our crops. At night we keep watch over our fields from the top of a bamboo-rick." Their village was situated in the *khud* of that hill. They said to me "Come to our village, there you will be comfortable in our home, here you will suffer great inconvenience." But I did not go to their village so late in the evening. The hill-track could only be climbed with great trouble, so in spite of my eagerness I was deterred by the difficulty of the road. Women were scarce in their part of the country. Like the *Pandavas* all the brothers marry one

* A piece of dry bread, with or without salt what matter? When you have given your head, why cry over it?

wife, and the children of that wife call them all father. I stayed on the hill-top that night and left in the morning. That day the *jhampaneas* travelled till noon, and then put down the *jhampan*, saying, "The road is broken, we can't go any further." What was to be done? The hillside was a sheer ascent, without footpath even. The road was broken, and beyond there lay only stones piled on stones. But in spite of the dangerous road I could not go back. I began to walk up that broken road over the stones—a man supporting me from behind by the waist. After trudging upwards like this for three hours, I came to the end of the broken road, and found a bungalow on the top. Inside there was a sofa, on which I lay down as soon as I got there. The *jhampaneas* went to the village and brought me a cup of milk, but over-exertion had taken away my appetite, and I could not drink it. As I had thrown myself on the sofa, so I lay the whole night, without rising once. In the morning I felt a little stronger, the *jhampaneas* brought a cup of milk which I drank and then left the place. Going higher up I reached Narkhaada that day. This is a very high peak, and I found it exceedingly cold.

The next morning, after taking some milk, I started on foot. Soon I came to a deep forest, through which the pathway led. Some broken rays of the sun pierced through the foliage and fell on the path, enhancing the beauty of the scenery. As I walked along I saw huge old uprooted trees lying prone here and there on the ground, many a young tree also had been burnt by the forest fire and come to grief ere its prime. After walking a long way, I got into the *jhampan* and penetrated further into the forest. Looking through it as I ascended the hill, I could see only mighty trees covered with dense green foliage, without a single flower or fruit. Only on a certain kind of big tree called the *kelu*, a sort of ugly green fruit is to be seen, which even birds do not eat. But the various kinds of grass and plants that grow on the hillside are very beautiful, and countless flowers bloom thereon in profusion. White, red, yellow, blue and gold, blossoms of all colours attract the eye from all directions. The mark of God's most skilful hand seemed evident in the grace and beauty of these flowers, and their stainless purity. Though these did not

possess a scent equal to their beauty, another kind of white rose bloomed in bunches throughout the wilderness, and made the whole forest-land fragrant with perfume. These white roses were only a cluster of four petals. In some places the *chameli* (Jasmine) also gave forth its scent. Here and there the small fruit of the strawberry shone like bits of red stone. A servant who was with me gave me the flowering branch of a creeper. I had never seen such a beautiful flowering creeper before,—my eyes were opened and my heart became full-blown. I saw the Universal Mother's hand resting on those small white blossoms. Who was there in this forest to inhale the scent of these flowers or see their beauty,—yet with what loving care had she endowed them with sweet scent and loveliness, moistened them with dew, and arrayed them on the creeper. Her mercy and tenderness became manifest in my heart. Lord! when such is thy compassion for these little flowers, what must be the extent of thy mercy for us! Thy mercy will endure in my heart and soul for ever and ever. Thy mercy has pierced my soul so deeply, that even though I were to lose my head, it would never depart from within my heart.

هرکدام مهر تو از لوح دل و جان درود
 اینچنان مهر توام در دل و جان جائے گرفت
 که گرم سر درود مهر تو از جان درود

I repeated this verse of Hafiz aloud the whole day on my way, and remained steeped in the waters of his mercy till evening, when shortly before sunset I reached a peak called Sunghri. How and when the day passed away I knew not. From this high peak I was enchanted with the beauty of two mountain ranges facing each other, of which one hill contained a deep forest, the abode of bears and suchlike wild animals. Another hill was colored gold from top to bottom with ripe fields of wheat. Scattered upon it at long distances were villages consisting of ten or twelve huts grouped together, shining in the sun. Some hills, again, were covered with short grasses from head to foot. Other hills by their very nakedness heightened the beauty of their wooded neighbours. Each

mountain was standing serenely in the pride of its own majesty without fear of anyone. But the way-farers on its bosom were in a state of continual fear, like the servants of a king.—One false step meant destruction. The sun set, and darkness began gradually to steal across the earth, still I sat alone on that peak. From afar the twinkling lights here and there upon the hills alone gave evidence of human habitation.

The next morning I began to descend on foot the hill that was wooded. It is as easy to go down as it is difficult to climb a hill. On this hill there were only forests of *kelu* trees. But it should not be called a forest, for it was better than a garden. The *kelu* tree is straight and tall as the *devadaru*. Its branches reach up to the top and are decorated with fir-like leaves, growing thickly, but each one no bigger than a needle. Covered with dense foliage, and outspread like the wings of a big bird, its branches bear the weight of a great load of snow in winter yet instead of its leaves getting seared and faded by the snow, they become more vigorous and remain ever-green. Is this not wonderful? What work of God is not wonderful? From the foot of this hill to its top, these trees stand quietly in rows like soldiers. Is it possible for any garden made by human hands to possess the grandeur and beauty of such a sight? These *kelu* trees have no flowers. They are forest-trees, and the fruit they bear is of a very inferior kind, still we gain much benefit from them for they produce tar. After walking some distance I got into the *jhampan*. On the way I saw a waterfall suitable for bathing, so I bathed in its frozen ice-cold water and gained fresh vigour and purified myself by worshipping Brahma. A head of goats and *obis* were passing by, my *jhampan* caught hold of a milch-goat, and brought it to me saying "We can get milk from this." I got only a quarter of a seer of milk from it. I was surprised to get my accustomed milk after prayers on the roadside, and drank it with thanks to the good God. "*Sabānā Jyākā tum dātā so mai visara na Jai.*" May I not forget that thou art the giver to all creatures. I then walked on. At the end of the wood I came upon a village, and was delighted to find once more ripe fields of wheat, oats and other crops. Here and there were opium fields. In one field women

were cutting the ripe crops contentedly, in another the peasants were drawing the plough over the earth in expectation of future harvest. Getting into the *Jhimpan* again on account of the sun, I reached a hill called Boali nearly at midday. This was much below Sunghri. At the foot of this hill was the river Nagari, and close by, under the other hills, flowed the river Sutlej. From the top of Boali hill the Sutlej appeared only a yard wide, and glittered like silver-leaf in the rays of the sun. On the banks of this river there is a town called Rampur, which is celebrated here, as being the capital of the Raja who is lord of all these hills. The hill on which Rampur is situated could be seen close by, but to go there one would have to traverse many downward tracks. This Raja was about 25 years of age, and knew a little English. From Rampur the Sutlej passes through Sohini, the capital city of the Raja of Bhajji and then dropping to Bilaspur it leaves the mountains and flows through the Punjab.

The day before, I had continually descended from Sunghri to Boali, to-day also I began descending the hill in the morning, and reached the banks of the river Nagari in the afternoon. The mighty current of this stream, dashing against the huge elephantine rocks contained in its bosom, becomes fierce and foamy, and with a thundering sound rolls on to meet the sea, by command of the Almighty. From both its banks two mountains rise up straight to a great height like immense walls, and then incline backwards. The rays of the sun do not find room enough to remain here long. A charming bridge was hanging over the river, by means of which I crossed over to the other side and rested in a neat and clean little bungalow. This valley is very pretty and very lonely. Within twenty miles of it there is not a single human being or habitation. Only one man was living there with his family in one room, which was not a room, but a cave in the rocks. Here they cooked, and here they slept. I saw his wife dancing joyfully with a baby on her back, and another child of hers running about laughing on a dangerous part of the hill, and his father sowing pota-

toes in a small field. God had provided every thing necessary for their happiness here. Kings sitting on their thrones rarely found such peace and happiness as this. In the evening I was walking alone on the banks of this river, charmed with its beauty, when I looked up suddenly and found ‘ *parvato vahniman* ’*—the hill was lighted up with flames. As the evening wore on and night advanced, the fires also began to spread. Like arrows of fire, a hundred thousand sparks fell swift as stars and attacked the trees below, down to the banks of the river. By degrees every tree cast off its own form and assumed the form of fire, and blind darkness fled afar from that spot. As I looked upon this wonderful form of fire, I felt the glory of that Divinity who dwells in fire. Before this, in many a wood I had seen charred trees that bore witness to forest-fires, and in the night I had seen the beauty of fires burning on distant hills, but here I was delighted to see for myself the origin, spread, growth, and arrest of a forest-fire. It kept burning all night, whenever I woke up at night I saw its light. When I got up in the morning, I saw many charred trees emitting smoke, and here and there the all-devouring ravenous fire burning in a dim and exhausted manner, like the lamps remaining in the morning after a festive night. I went and bathed in the river, pouring water from it over my head with a brass pot. The water was so icy-cold, that it seemed as if the brain in my head got congealed. My ablutions and prayers over, I drank some milk, and left the place. Again ascending continually since the morning, I reached a terribly high peak called Dârun (terrible) Ghat at noon, and saw in front another monstrously high snow-clad mountain crest, which with head upraised like an uplifted thunder-bolt proclaimed the awful majesty of God. Arriving at Darun Ghat on the first day of *Ashad*, I saw snow falling from the clouds clinging to the snowclad mountain in front. Even for Simla people snowfall in *Ashad* is unusual, because before the end of *Chaitra* the Simla hills divest themselves of their snow-worn drapery, and in *Vaisakh* put on their lovely spring dress. On the 2nd *Ashad* I descended from this hill to another hill called Sirahan. There is a house here belonging to the Rana of Rampur, who sometimes

* The first term of the Indian syllogism.

comes there to enjoy the cool breezes when the heat in Rampur becomes excessive. In the hot weather the foot of the hills is hotter even than our part of the country,—and it is only on the mountain-top that the air is cool all the year round. Leaving this on the 4th *Ashad* I returned safely to my Simla lodgings on the 13th by the grace of God, and knocked at the closed door. Kishori opened it and stood before me “Why, your face is quite black” I said “I did not remain here” He answered, “When I disobeyed your orders and was unable to accompany you, I was filled with remorse, and felt miserable. I couldn’t bear to stay here any longer so I went down the hill to Jwalamukhi. There I was roasted by the flames of Jwalamukhi and the heat of the *Faistha* sun. That is why I have come back black in the face. It has served me right. As I have sown so I have reaped. I am much to blame, and have given you great offence. I cannot hope that your honor will let me stay with you any more.” I laughed and said “You need not be afraid, I forgive you. Stay with me as you used to.”

He said ‘When I went down I left a servant here in these lodgings, but on my return I found he had decamped. The doors were all shut, on opening them and entering the house I saw that our clothes and boxes were all there, he had taken nothing away. I came here only three days ago.’ I was startled to hear this. If I had arrived three days earlier, I should have been put to great inconvenience. My heart overflowed with gratitude to think how many physical dangers God had delivered my body from during these twenty days of mountaineering, how many sublime lessons of patience and fortitude, piety and unworldliness he had taught my mind, and how much He had purified and elevated my soul by His delightful companionship. I saluted him reverently, and going inside began to sing His praises.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LIFE AT SIMLA

The rainy season now commenced in the Himalayas, and God's waterworks came into play night and day. Hitherto I had always seen clouds overhead, now I saw white vaporous clouds rising from the foot of the lowest hills. I was surprised to see this. Gradually they enveloped the hill up to the top, and surrounded by clouds I actually saw the kingdom of Indra as imagined by the seers of old. Shortly afterwards rain fell and the clouds cleared. Again they rose like cotton-wool from the hills and covered everything. Immediately after there was rain, then again the sun shone forth. During the heavy rains of *Śravana*, perhaps a fortnight would pass without the sun being visible. Then everything would be so wrapped in clouds, that it seemed as if there was nothing in creation except myself, and with me there was only God. At this time my mind easily became detached from the world, and my soul naturally became collected, and rested in the Supreme Spirit. In the month of *Bhadra* there was a great noise of rushing waters amidst the matted locks of the Himalayas, its springs were all full-bodied, its waterfalls let loose, its roadways difficult to travel. In *Āśvīn* there is not much display of autumn here. From the month of *Kartik* one began to feel the cold wind to be too cold for one's bare body, and before the month of *Āgrahāyan* was half through, one morning after getting up I came out and saw with delighted eyes, that the hill from top to bottom was covered with snow. The lord of the mountains had robed himself in a garment of silver white. For the first time I drew in a breath of ice-cold air. As time passed on, the cold increased. One day I saw snow falling like light carded cotton-wool from the black clouds. Having only seen frozen water before in the shape of ice, I had thought it to be heavy and hard as stone, but now I found it to be thin and light as wool. By shaking one's clothes the snow falls off, leaving them dry as before. On awaking one morning in the month of *Pauṣa*, I

found that three or four feet of snow had fallen and blocked all the roads. Coolies came and cleared a path by cutting through the snow, and then traffic was resumed. Overcome by curiosity I walked on the snow-clad road, and did not give up my morning promenade. My feeling of elation and delight made me walk so far and so briskly, that I began to feel hot in the winter amidst the snow, and my under-clothing got wet with perspiration. This is a proof of my bodily health and strength at that time. Every morning I used to walk a great distance thus joyfully, and then take tea and milk. At noon, whilst bathing I would pour iced water with my own hands over my head. For a second the blood in my heart would stop circulating, then again it would go on with redoubled quickness, and instil greater vigour and energy into my body. Even in the cold of *Pausha* and *Magha*, I would not allow the fire to be lighted in my room. I followed this rule in order to find out for myself how much cold the human body is capable of bearing, and to acquire habits of endurance and fortitude. At night I used to leave my bedroom windows open, and I enjoyed the cold night wind very much indeed. Wrapping myself in a blanket, and sitting up in bed oblivious of all else, I spent half the night reciting hymns and the verses of Hafiz— It is the holy man who keeps awake, not the man of pleasure nor the sick man. "He who knows Brahma, who contemplates Brahma, who drinks the nectar of delight in Brahma who loves Brahma,—he it is that wakes."

نار بآن شمع شب ابرو زر کاشانه کدوب
حال ما سرجت بدرید که جامانه کیست

"The lamp that turns night into day, in whose chamber is that lamp? It has burnt my life to ashes, to whom has it brought delight? ask I"

Those nights in which I felt His intimate companionship, I repeated aloud in ecstasy —

گر شمع معارید درین جمع که امشب
در مجلسی ما ماه رخ درسی تمام است

"Do not bring a lamp into my audience-hall to-day To-night, that full moon my friend is shining here"

The nights I spent thus delightfully, and in the daytime remained plunged in deep meditation. Every day till noon I sat rigidly with folded limbs, and concentrated my mind on the deliberation and examination of the first principles of the soul. Finally I came to this conclusion, that thoughts which were opposed to first principles could not be entertained in the mind at all. The latter were not any man's individual way of thinking, they were universally true for all time. The authenticity of first principles did not depend on anything else, they were self-evident, and proved themselves, since they were founded on spiritual consciousness. Relying on these first principles, the ancient sages of the Upanishads have said "देवस्यैव महिमा तु लोके येनेदं भास्यते ब्रह्मवक्त्रं ।" This is the glory of that Supreme Deity, by whom the wheel of this universe is made to revolve. Deluded by ignorance, some scholars say it is by the laws of nature,—by the blind force of matter, or some say that, without any cause, it is by the force of Time alone that this wide world goes round. But I say—it is the glory of that Supreme Deity alone, by whom this universal wheel is being turned.

“स्वभावसिद्धी कवयोवदन्ति कालसंस्थान्ये परिसृज्यमानाः ।

देवस्यैव महिमा तु लोके येनेदं भास्यते ब्रह्मवक्त्रं” ॥

“यदिदं किञ्च जगत् सञ्च प्राणएजति निःसृतं” ॥ All this world had issued forth from the living God, and exists by the power of the living God. “एष देवोविश्वकर्मा महात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।” This divine being, maker of the universe, and sublime of soul, dwells forever in the hearts of men. These irrefutable truths concerning first principles have overflowed from the pure hearts of the Rishis. १८

The tree that stands in front of us, we see and touch, but we can neither see nor touch the space in which it stands. In course of time the tree puts forth branches, and leaves, and bears flowers and fruit; we see all this, but cannot see the thread of time which runs through all. We see the power of the life-force by which the tree is enabled to draw sap from its roots and nourish itself, the force which operates in every vein of its leaves,—but that force we cannot see. That conscious being, by whose will the tree has received this life-force,—He himself pervades the tree through, and through, but Him we cannot see. “एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽस्मा न प्रकाशते ।” “This secret

spirit exists in all creatures and in all things, but He is not revealed." The senses perceive only outward things, they cannot perceive that which is inside,—shame on them

“पराञ्च खानि व्यदधत् स्वयम्भूतस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।

कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमेवैव आहृत्यचक्षुरस्तत्त्वमिच्छन् ॥”

The self-existent God has made senses face outwards. Hence they see outside things alone, not the soul within. Sometimes a wise man, desirous of immortality, closes his eyes and sees a spirit dwelling in all things ' Hearing this injunction, laying it to heart, and pondering deeply upon it, I saw God, not with fleshly eyes, but with the inner vision, from these Himalayan Hills, the holy land of Brahma. This was given me by the Upanishads “ईशावासुनिदं सर्वम्” । “All things enveloped with God,” I enveloped all things with God. “वेदाहं एत पुनर्यं महान् आदित्यवर्णं तमस परस्मात् ।” “I have come to know that great sun-coloured being beyond this darkness ”

بعد ازین نور بافاق دهم از دل خویش

که نور رشید رسیدیم غبار آجر شد

Henceforward I shall radiate light from my heart upon the world, since I have reached the sun, and darkness has vanished.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A VISIT TO THE RANA OF BHAJJI

Towards the end of *Magha*, when I was absorbed in meditation on Brahma, a man of quality came to see me with gold bangles on both wrists. "I am the minister, the vizier of the Rana of Bhajji. The Rana Sahib has sent me to invite you, he wishes to meet you. Bhajji is not very far from here, and I will make suitable arrangements for a comfortable journey." I accepted his invitation and the date of departure was fixed. The vizier came to fetch me on the appointed day. We began descending from Simla to the valley below, he on his horse and I in my jhampan. The descent was never-ending—the lower we went the further down we had to go. Then when we came to the river bank I knew we should have to descend no further. On the banks of this river Sutlej, lay Sohni, the capital of the Rana. We arrived there in the dusk of evening. The next morning I entered the palace. The people there took me first of all to the quarters of the royal *Guru*. Before I had reached the door, the royal *guru* Sukhanandnath came and welcomed me with open arms, and taking me upstairs made me sit by him. This was the Sukhanandanath I met at Dehli, who used to stay with his *guru* Hariharânanda Tirthaswami in Rammohun Roy's garden. He was a Tantrik Brahmin worshipper. He believed in the *Adwaita* creed of the Mahanirvana tantra. Hearing that I was in Simla, he had asked the Rana to send me an invitation. He had hoped to have a jolly time in my company, feasting and drinking, and thought that we should be drawn together by feelings of conviviality and friendliness. He did not know that I didn't touch wine, and that in my opinion drinking was not right. "नद्यमद्वेद्यमपेयमशास्त्रम्"—Give not wine, take not wine, touch not wine at all. Their merriment and high spirits were damped by my inability to join in their carousal. They were greatly disappointed and grieved at this, and charged Kishori with making separate arrangements for my food. Sukhananda expressed great dissatisfaction with the Sanskrit

commentaries I had written on the *Kathopanishad*, and said that they were not in agreement with Sankaracharya's commentaries, therefore they were not to be held in esteem. He showed me a Hindi translation he had made of the Book of Brahmadharma, and requested me to publish it. When I took leave of him, he came downstairs with me, and asked me to see a room on the first floor. On entering it I saw a beautiful print hanging on the wall in front with "Om tatsat" written in big gold Devanagari characters in the middle. Sukhananda entered this room very reverently. He also said "We have built a Kalighat here on the banks of the river, like the Kalighat there in Calcutta," but I said I couldn't go to see it. Then I bid him good-bye, and went to see the Rana. Chairs were arranged in a spacious hall, in which the Rana greeted me with his courtiers. He made me sit down on a chair, the others also sat in separate chairs. Soon after the Rajkumar, like *Kumar* himself, came and adorned the audience-hall. The Rana Sahib said to me "The Kumar is learning Sanskrit, examine him a little," upon which the Kumar said "I have gone through the whole grammar." I said "Tell me, what form will the words '*ganga udakam*' take in *Sandhi*?" "*Gangodakam*" he replied, quickly and loudly. After taking leave of the Rana I returned to my rooms, and had my bath and breakfast.

Next morning I went alone for a walk on the banks of the river Sutlej. It was about as broad here as the river Jalangi in Krishnagar,—its waters were as blue and bright and clear as the sea. Like the poet Valmiki's river *Tamasâ*, "*sajjanânim yathâ manah*" was an apt simile for the waters of the river Sutlej here. I crossed the river on a water-skin. Wooden boats were of no use in this river, because big rocks were embedded in its course. Water-skins were the only possible means of crossing over. On reaching the other side I found the water there as hot as the Sitakunda of Monghyr. Particularly strange is the fact that, as the river swells and broadens in the rains, and occupies the place of the hot water, the latter also advances in a line with it and remains hot along the bank. I saw many sick people had come to bathe there. They say it cures many kinds of diseases.

The head of the mountain landlords was the Raja. Next came the Rana, then the *thakur*, and last the *zemindar*. Here the *zemindars* are the tillers of the soil. The *zemindars* of Hindusthan are in the same hard case. In the hills the Raja and Ranas have more power, and it is they who govern the tenants. At the time of their marriage, the bride is given away with girl companions. The son born to the Rani becomes the Raja or Rana, and those born to the companions live in the Raja's family, and are supported all their life. The daughters born to the companions are known as the companions of the Raja's daughter, and have to bestow their life and youth on the husband of the princess. What a shameful business! The Raja and the Rana have many Ranis, and thus many companions. When the one husband dies, they all remain shut up like prisoners, and cry all their lives. There is no means of deliverance for them.

I stayed there for a week. Then I took leave of the Rana and royal *guru*, and began ascending towards Simla. On the way I entered a forest, where I saw the Rajkumar, with jewelled ear-rings, diamond necklace, strings of pearls and handsome clothes on, going about hunting from one part of the woods to another. In the rays of the sun his fresh young face glowed and looked very charming. He seemed to me just like a forest god. One moment I saw him, the next he plunged into the woods,—now he was near, then far away, now down below, again up on the hills. I climbed up the narrow broken foot-path with great difficulty, and arrived safely in Simla. On the roads up there I found snow lying, even in that month of *Falgun*. The trees and plants were all faded and sapless, and their branches rattled in the wind like the hollow shoots of the bamboo. As the month of *Chaitra* came to an end, the whole land blossomed forth into a lovely garden. Again I saw the new year. A year had been spent in the same rooms which I had entered last year in *Vaishakh*. Now I left these bazar lodgings, and rented a bungalow in a beautiful and quiet spot on the top of the hill, which I liked very much. On that hill-top there was only one tree, which became the friend of my solitude. In this month of *Vaishakh*, after my noonday meal, I used to wander through the gardens of all the

empty houses. How can my countrymen of Bengal understand the mystery of walking about under the midday sun of *Vaishakh*, with a woollen overcoat on? Sometimes I would spend half the day absorbed in contemplation, sitting on a stone slab near some lonely hill. One day during my wanderings I came upon a path leading through a wooded hill, and immediately began to walk along it following the impulse of the moment. It was then four o'clock in the afternoon. I was so taken up with walking that I went on and on without stopping. One footstep succeeded another, but I was not aware of it. Where I was going, how far I had come, how far I should go,—that I did not calculate. After a long time I saw a way-farer, who went in the direction opposite to mine. This interrupted the course of my meditation,—and I returned to consciousness. I then saw that it was evening and the sun had set. Must I not retrace the whole long way? I turned and walked back quickly, but Night also gained quickly on me. Hill forest and glade, all were covered with darkness. Like a lamp in that darkness the half-moon accompanied me on my journey. No sound was to be heard on any side, save that of my footsteps crackling on the dry leaves of the road. A solemn feeling was aroused in my breast, together with that of fear. With thrilling heart I saw the eyes of God within that forest. His sleepless gaze was fixed upon me. Those eyes were my guide in this difficult path. Fearless in the midst of many fearsome things, I reached home before eight o'clock at night. This gaze of His has become rooted indelibly in my heart. Whenever I fall into trouble, I see those eyes of His.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A DIVINE COMMAND AND PERILOUS JOURNEY HOMEWARD.

Again the clouds and lightning of *Sravana* and *Bhadra* began to display their pageantry, and successive showers of rain beat on the hills. By that eternal Being's behest, the weeks, months, seasons and years revolve in their course,—nothing can resist His ruling power. At this time I used to wander about the rocky caves, and enjoy the varied and marvellous beauty of the rivers and waterfalls. In the rains these mighty torrents carry huge blocks of stone along. Nothing can obstruct their impetuous course,—they forcibly fling aside whatever comes in their way. One day in the month of Aswin I went down the *khud*, and standing on the bridge of a river, was filled with wonder to see the indomitable strength and playful whirls of its current. Oh! how pure and white is the river here. How naturally clear and cool its waters. Why then does it dash downwards in order to deprive itself of this purity? The lower it goes, the more will it become defiled and tainted by the dirt and refuse of this earth,—why then does it rush headlong in that very direction? But what power has it to keep still for its own sake? By command of that All-ruling One, though it be stained with the dirt of the earth, still it has to humble its pride and take a downward course, in order to fertilize the land, and make it yield grain. I was musing thus, when suddenly I heard the solemn commandment of the guide within me—"Give up thy pride, and be lowly like this river. The truth thou hast gained, the devotion and trustfulness that thou hast learnt here,—go make them known to the world." I was startled! Must I then turn back from this holy land of the Himalayas? I had never thought of this. After having gone through so much trouble to detach myself from the world, must I again return to it, and be one with worldly people? My mind took a downward course. I remembered the world, I thought of the home to which I should have to go back, my ears would be deafened by

the noise of the world. This thought blighted my heart, and I returned to my rooms in a dejected frame of mind. With night no song came to my lips I lay down with an uneasy heart,—and could not sleep well I rose while it was yet dark, and found my heart trembling, and beating hard I had never felt like this before, and was afraid I might fall seriously ill. Thinking it would do me good, I went out for a walk After walking a long time I came home when the sun had risen, yet my palpitation did not stop Then I called Kishori and said, “Kishori I shall not stay in Simla any longer, send for a *ghampan*” While saying these words I found my palpitation subsiding Was this then the medicine I needed? All that day I went on making the necessary arrangements and preparations for going home,—and that gave me relief The palpitation ceased, and I felt all right. It was God’s command that I should go back home,—could man’s will hold out against that? At the slightest protest against that command, one’s very physical nature revolted,—such was His ordinance “*Hukum andar sab koi, bāhar hukum na koi*” Could I possibly stay in Simla any longer? My senses were then saying to me “What a lot of trouble you have given us during these two years In spite of all our entreaties and prayers you have not gratified even a single harmless impulse of ours, now we have become weak, and cannot serve you any longer” Whether my constitution was weak or strong, it didn’t matter, how could I stay on in Simla? His will was my law Harmonising my will with His, I made ready to go home Strength inspired my mind There were still many dangers on the road, and rebel bands lurked still in various places. But I did not give way to all these fears As the river’s mighty current rolls onward in spite of obstructing stones, so did I also not pay heed to any hindrance whatever.

On the 1st of *Kartik*, the *Vijaya* tenth day of the moon, my *ghampan*, *dandi* and horse were all ready on the high road of Simla bazaar. My countrymen and friends gathered round me very sorrowfully to bid me good-bye. After taking leave of everybody, I got into my *ghampan* and started. On the *Vijaya* day Simla cast me forth. It is very easy to go downhill, and I soon reached

Kalka at the foot of the hill. The night passed, and in the morning I saw the beautiful sunrise, which cheered and brightened my heart. Leaving Kalka I came to Panjour. Here I found there were grand doings in a garden. Hundreds of fountains were in play, they seemed to have gained new life, and joyfully spouting water, imitated the rains by their continued showers. I had never seen such beautiful fountains before. Thence I went to Umballa, and hiring a push-push travelled in it day and night. The nights were moonlit, the full moon of autumn bloomed in the sky, a cool breeze blew across the open fields. Looking out of the carriage I saw horsemen riding beside it. For fear of the rebels, Govt. had given orders for outriders to accompany the carriages at night, to ensure the safety of passengers. From this I guessed the dangers of the road, and felt rather perturbed. At midday the carriage stopped at a place near Cawnpore to change horses, and I saw that many tents were pitched in a field there, crowds had collected, and a bazaar had been opened. I sent Kishori for some food, and he got me buffalo's milk. What bazaar is this? I asked. He replied, they are taking away the Badshah of Delhi captive, hence this bazaar. On my way to Simla I had seen him happy, flying kites on the Jumna sands, and on my way back I found him a captive, being led to prison. Who can tell what fate will overtake anybody in this dissolving sorrowful world? After a long and dangerous journey from Simla I arrived at Cawnpore, where the railway line had been opened. Getting up early in the morning, I took some tea and hurried to the station. Kishori came back from the station and said, 'Tickets can't be had. The wounded soldiers from Delhi are going in to-day's train so there is no room for anyone else.' I went to the station myself to make enquiries. A Bengali stationmaster seeing me exclaimed "Oh, is it you? Here, stop the train. I thought it was someone else." He said "I shall give you a ticket, and I have power to stop the train and let you get in. I am an old pupil of your Tatwabodhini grammar school. You have often given me prizes at the examinations. My name is Dinanath." He gave me a ticket. I got into a first-class carriage with the officers and left Cawnpore. At three o'clock we reached Allahabad. The station had not

then been built Our train stopped somewhere on the road, and from there we got down and walked. After going a distance of six miles, we reached the traveller's bungalow of Allahabad, which was quite full. There was no room for me there. I had a chair with me ; I sat on it under a tree and kept my things there. Kishori brought a jar of water for me from the dak-bungalow. I said to him "Go and take rooms for me in Allahabad City and come and fetch me , I shan't touch anything before I move into lodgings" Kishori went away, and shortly after a carriage drove up Two men with their cloths round their necks, got down from it and said to me " Our red house is near the Fort If you will deign to stay there, sir, we shall feel highly honoured , we are now in mourning for our father." I accompanied them to the red house. They had a household god, from whose offerings *dal* and *roti* came for me in the evening I was then feeling very hungry, and thought the food extremely good I ate it all with great relish, and was hoping to get some more, but nobody thought of offering me any' After partaking of this consecrated food I took my rest there that day.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE RETURN HOME.

The next day I saw Government had posted placards in the streets of Allahabad for travellers, saying "Govt is not responsible for the lives of those who want to go further east." This notice made me feel very disturbed in mind. I heard that Kumar Singh was still fighting in Dinapore. If a land journey was so full of dangers, would travelling by boat be safer. I wondered. Thus thinking I went for a walk on the banks of the Ganges. Thence I saw smoke issuing from a steamer, which was on the point of starting. I ran and got into it, and asked the captain where it was going. He said "A steamer has stuck on the sands a little way off in midstream, and this steamer is now going to haul it off, after returning here it will go to Calcutta three days later." I then expressed my eagerness to secure one of its cabins. "This steamer has been chartered by Govt. to carry the sick and wounded soldiers to Calcutta," he said "and passengers cannot be accommodated here. But I can take you if you can get an order from the Brigadier-General." Taking him at his word, after much searching I hunted up and presented myself at the Brigadier's office, which was a big bungalow. He was then very busy with other matters, and asked me to come the next morning. I couldn't make out whether morning meant early morning or ten o'clock, so I presented myself at his door early in the morning. I waited and waited till 10 o'clock, when he called me to his office. I made my request to which he replied "The soldiers will go by this steamer, and none but their families can be accommodated with them." I said "Since Government are warning passengers against travelling by land, and I am getting an opportunity of going safely by boat with their people, why should you not let me go?" The Brigadier had thought that I might be one of the rebel party. On hearing this, he asked me who I was. I told him I knew Lord Hay and others in Simla, and introduced myself more fully. He then wrote a letter to the captain of the steamer, asking him to give me a

cabin. The steamer had come back in the meantime, and was ready to go to Calcutta. I went and gave the Captain the Brigadier's letter. But now he said "What's the good of this letter? There is not a single cabin vacant on board, how can I give you one?" "If no cabin is to be had, I shall go on deck, take the hire of a cabin, and let me go on the deck." Hearing our altercation, the captain of the cargo-boat attached to the steamer came up and said "There is no cabin available in the steamer, but I am willing to let the cabin I occupy in the boat." "Alright" I said "I will pay you the money, you give me your cabin" "Go and get your things" he replied, "meanwhile I shall put the cabin in order for you" Delighted with his offer, I hastened to the red house and brought all my things. My old friend Nilkamal Mitra gave me a basket of sweets for the journey, which came in very useful. The steamer soon left for Calcutta. But on reaching Benares an impediment occurred. The captain got a telegram to say that a second steamer was coming for this cargo-boat, and this one would have to go back and fetch another cargo-boat. The captain was much disturbed on receiving this telegram, and kept saying "I shall give up Government service, there is no knowing what orders they'll give next. To have to go back after coming all this way,—this is outrageous. The Captain was anxious to go home,—and if the steamer went away leaving the cargo-boat behind, the ladies and gentlemen on board would have to return also, so they all put their heads together and decided that there was nothing in the telegram which obliged them to leave the cargo-boat on that very spot. When they met the in-coming steamer they would give it the cargo-boat and go back. Perhaps they might reach Calcutta before meeting it. The Captain agreed to this proposal, and set out towards Calcutta. While on board, I saw in the papers the news of the death of my youngest brother Nagendranath. Grieved at this sad news, I absent-mindedly left the deck and went into my cabin to fetch something, and as I hurriedly left the cabin with it my foot found no resting-place. Without taking another step forward I instantly leaned backwards and fell into the cabin. The sailors ran up with cries of dismay and saw that one of my legs was hanging in the hold and the rest of my body

was lying in the cabin. "Did you not see that we had taken up the boards in front of the cabin in order to haul up the luggage?" they said. No, I had not noticed it, I had thought the passage was all right as usual. Had I taken another step, I would have fallen into the hold fifty cubits deep, and smashed my head to pieces. That day my life was saved. But "the robber of the world sleeps not, do not think yourself safe from him, if he does not steal to-day, he will steal to-morrow."

رهبر دهر نجات است مشور ادس ارر
اگر امرور بپردہ است کہ فردا نبرد

On nearing Rampur Boalia, we saw a steamer coming along, trailing clouds of smoke. At this the captain stopped our steamer, the approaching steamer also stopped, and both cast anchor there. The ladies and gentleman went and saw that this steamer was a small one, and had very few cabins, which would not accommodate them all. The men might manage to stay somehow on deck, but what would the ladies do? The captain went to see the military surgeon and other men in the cargo-boat, and asked them to give up their cabins. The military surgeon was a plain-spoken man, and said "I have given up my cabin many a time to please the ladies, but have never got so much as a 'thank you' for my pains." None of the men agreed to give up their cabins to the ladies, at last the captain came and entreated me, saying, "There is no room for the ladies, they would be much obliged if you would kindly give up your cabin." I did so with the greatest pleasure. At this the captain was very pleased, and said "The English gentlemen refused to make room for the ladies, though they are their own countrymen, but how generously you have done this for them,—we are all most grateful to you." I was not put to any inconvenience by giving up my cabin, as the captain and others made very nice arrangements for my comfort on deck. I slept at ease at night on deck in the open air. I sent Kishori home in advance by boat, in order to tell them I was coming, because it would take some time to change steamers at Rampur and make other arrangements. The next day we started and on the 1st of Agrahayana 1780 I safely arrived in Calcutta. I was then 41 years old.



Maharshi
Age 45

(Page 146

Ne'er shall I forget thy mercy all my life, night and day will it remain entwined within my heart.

*Namastestu Brahman, Namastestu.—Salutation to Thee,
O' Brahman.*

APPENDIX.

A. THE POITA* CONTROVERSY

In a letter addressed to my father by Keshub Chandra Sen and his friends on the 19th June 1864, the following changes in the mode of conducting divine Service in the Samaj were proposed —

1. That no minister or preacher of the Samaj should retain any mark of caste or sectarian distinction whatever
2. That honest, upright and learned Brahmos only be allowed to occupy seats on the Vedi
3. That the hymns, expositions, sermons etc. should be expressive of liberal sentiments. No expression of disapprobation or slander must be used in them against any sect or religion, they should express a fellow feeling towards all

In the event of the aforesaid suggestions not being adopted, an alternative was proposed *viz.* that certain other days for public worship in the new form may be fixed for the benefit of the generality of Brahmos

The letter concludes in these words —

This compliance on your part will doubtless settle the present dispute and establish union among the Brahmos in place of the discord which has now arisen among them. Should you feel unwilling to comply with this request, you will oblige us by giving your advice as to the best means of establishing a separate Samaj for ourselves

KESHUB CHANDRA SEN
and five others.
23rd July 1864

* Wearing the Brahminical thread by Ministers of the Brahmo Samaj

Substance of the Reply — 1864

I received your letter of the 19th Ashad, expressing dissatisfaction with the present mode of conducting worship in the Samaj and proposing certain changes therein. Your desire for a change is natural and betokens a progressive spirit. [All institutions have to adapt themselves to altered conditions and environment or they are bound to languish and decay. Change and adaptability are the law of growth and progress.] The only question is, whether the changes proposed by you are really called for in the present condition of the Samaj. This I now gladly proceed to consider.

Your first proposition is that 'No minister or preacher of the Samaj should retain any mark distinctive of Caste or Sect. I do not suppose that you intend thereby to abolish surnames or similar indications of Caste or Sect. Your contention, I presume, only applies to the wearing of the Brahminical thread. I cannot, for several reasons, give my consent to your proposal and the reasons why I dissent are these. —

Long before any question of *Anushthan* had arisen, the only distinctive feature of the Samaj was the Monotheistic worship conducted in it. Those who had the courage to join in that worship had to undergo every kind of persecution, like the more advanced Brahmos of the present day. You must remember that the zeal and patience of the old class of Brahmos have paved the way for the reforms advocated and adopted by yourselves. There are many both among the old and new members who had not been able to advance in the path of Anushthanic reform, yet neither they nor you are the objects of my disregard. What I desire is simply this: that the old and the new members of the Samaj do combine their forces, so that their united strength may sustain the Institution and that your examples may strengthen and encourage those that are lagging behind. Your mutual spirit of antagonism and separation will, I fear, be to the disadvantage of both parties, you will lose in strength and stability as they in courage and progress. This will be as painful to me personally as detrimental to the interests of the Samaj and I consider it my bounden duty to prevent the adoption of measures likely to bring about such a calamitous result. Besides, it would undoubtedly savour of gross partiality on my part if I should feel

disposed to slight the older members by conceding to your terms. Nor is it possible for me to deprive men of privileges which they have acquired and enjoyed all along under rules enacted from the beginning and which are still in force. Should you be generous enough to bear with their infirmities and act in co-operation with them, with loving hearts and minds, as with your elder brothers, you will no doubt be able to do greater service to our common cause than were you to act in the manner you now propose. The aim and object of both the parties is the same *viz* to secure the well-being of the Samaj, though you may differ as to the method of carrying out your objects.

It is superfluous for me to notice your second and third proposals, because the Samaj has been always trying, according to its lights, and is ever ready to act up to the principles enunciated by you.

You request, in the next place, that, in the event of my declining to accede to your suggestions, a certain day in the week other than the day now observed may be specified for service in the new form for the benefit of the general body of Brahmos. By this it would appear that you refer to the Brahmos who are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. I cannot admit that your views are shared by the majority of Brahmos. On the contrary the number of those disagreeing with you would appear to be much larger than the party you represent. If you mean by Brahmos 'in general' the entire Brahmo Community, and ask for the appointment of some other day for their benefit, such a request seems to me to be altogether unreasonable, for the days already fixed for the Divine Service are not for Brahmos only but also for the Non-Brahmo-Public and those that attend such service have all expressed themselves perfectly satisfied with the manner in which the proceedings are conducted.

If it be, however, your desire that some other day be set apart for the purpose on behalf of your small party, I am really sorry that I cannot comply with this request. You say that "this will be good for both parties and that such a step is likely to introduce harmony in place of discord now reigning in the Samaj." But I

cannot agree. I can clearly foresee that the result will be quite the contrary of what you contemplate. Instead of promoting harmony it will accentuate the discord. I had once before made a rule that some of you should conduct the Service on the first Wednesday of every month, in which case you would have been enabled, without requiring another day for special worship, to carry out your schemes of reform. But to my great disappointment, you declined to attend, and I now see no way of union unless you join together in worship as before.

With regard to your proposal to establish a separate Samaj, I can only say that the more such Samajes are established for the worship of One God, the better for the whole country. However, in accordance with the instructions of the illustrious Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Samaj, my advice to you is that the Service should be conducted in such a way that it may uplift the intellect, heart and soul towards God and may help to infuse righteousness, love and purity into the hearts and minds of the worshippers.

Being prevented by the aforesaid reasons from giving my consent to your proposals, I beg that you will not be displeased with me. May peace and prosperity wait on you and God be with you always *

Your well-wisher
Debendra Nath Tagore.

* The original letters are given in the original Autobiography—Appendix Part II by Priyanath Shastri.

Adi Brahmo Samaj
55, Upper Chitpui Road, Calcutta

B THE SPECIAL MESSAGE OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ AND ITS PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY.

The Maharshi's views on the above gathered from an address delivered by him before the Brahmo Sammilan (Union) Sabha in 1867.

We are worshippers of Brahma, the Supreme Being. In this we are at one with Orthodox Hinduism, for all our Shastras declare

with one voice the supremacy of the worship of Brahma, enjoining Image worship for the help of those who are incapable of grasping the highest Truth

Our first point of distinction is in the positive aspect of our creed wherein worship is defined as consisting in 'Loving Him and doing the works He loveth'—this at once differentiates us from all religions and creeds which postulate a special or verbal revelation or wherein definite forms, rites or ceremonials are deemed essential one way or the other

The negative aspect of our creed which prohibits the worship of any created being or thing as the Creator further distinguishes us from all who are addicted to the worship of Avatars or incarnations or who believe in the necessity of mediators, symbols or idols of any description

(We base our faith on the fundamental truths of Religion, attested by Reason and Conscience and refuse to permit man, book or image to stand in the way of the direct communion of our soul with the Supreme Spirit.

This message of the Brahmo Samaj in the abstract does not materially differ from the doctrines of the pure Theistic Bodies all the world over Viewed historically and socially, however, the Brahmo Samaj has the further distinction of being the bearer of this message to the Hindu people This was the idea of its founder Ram Mohan Roy, this points to the duty incumbent upon all Brahmos of to-day, and will serve as the guiding principle in the selection of texts, forms and ceremonials as aids to the religious life

(We are in and of the great Hindu Community and it devolves upon us by example and precept to hold up as a beacon the highest truths of the Hindu Shastras In their light must we purify our heritage of customs, usages, rites and ceremonies and adapt them to the needs of our conscience and our community But we must beware of proceeding too fast in matters of social change, lest we be separated from the greater body whom we would guide and uplift.

(While we should on no account allow any consideration of country, caste or kinship to prevent our actions being consistent

with our faith, we must make every allowance for, and abstain from persecuting or alienating, those who think differently from us. Why should we needlessly wound the feelings of our parents and elders by desecrating an Image which they regard with the highest reverence, when all that our conscience can demand of us is to refrain from its adoration ?

The steering of this middle course is by no means an easy task but during my long experience I have been led greatly to hope for a brighter future, by the sympathetic response of our orthodox brethren to the ideal held up before them

The amount of conformity now and is expected by even the most orthodox, demands so little of us, that a little tact and common sense will in most cases be sufficient to obviate all friction

Nevertheless, great as are the claims of our land and our people, we must never forget that we are Brahmos first, and Indians or Hindus afterwards (We must on no account depart from our vow of renouncing the worship of Images and Incarnations, which is of the essence of our religion. It is a sound policy on our part to sink our minor differences, but on matters of principle no compromise is possible. Our Motherland is dear to us, but Religion is dearer, Brahma is dearest of all dearer than son dearer than riches supreme over everything else

See Appendix II to the original Autobiography

C. RELATIONS OF MAHARSHI AND BRAHMANANDA LETTERS

DARJELING,
7th July, 1882

REVEREND MAHARSHI,

From peak to peak of the Himalayas, I send you my respectful Pranams—do me the favour of accepting them. I am the same old Brahmanand of yours—your dutiful son and servant. You have given me a name of inestimable value—that name 'Brahmanand.' What greater fortune could that man want, who rejoices in Brahma,

the Lord. By giving me that name, you have, indeed, endowed me with riches beyond measure—treasure inexhaustible. By your blessing I have enjoyed supreme happiness in communion with Brahma. Vouchsafe your blessing yet again, that I may enjoy a greater measure of peace and happiness in such communion. How full of joy is Brahma! Hari, how sweet is he! Can sorrow and anguish remain when we see that benign countenance—life then becomes flooded with joy, and here on earth one enjoys heavenly bliss. By your blessing, may all the men and women of India enjoy such bliss. Your soul is ever soaring towards heaven. Take, I beseech you, the band of devotees with you by the hand, bind them with strings of love, that all may mount upwards with you.

This is to inform you that I intend leaving this to-morrow

Ever yours,
Keshub Chandra Sen

See Appendix to original Autobiography.

REPLY

BELoved BRAHMANANDA,

A letter was delivered to me on the morning of the 30th Ashad, from the familiar handwriting on the superscription. I at once concluded that it was from you, and on opening it how delighted was I to find that it was indeed your letter. As I commenced reading, the picture of your sweet face arose in my mind. Bodily apart though we are, I gave my loving embrace to this mental picture of you, and was flooded with joy.

With me you have been in entire sympathy. I have met no one so sympathetic as you, my Brahmanand.

Hafiz has said somewhere regretfully:—"I have met no one who assents to my words." If that mad poet had met a friend like you, he would no doubt have exclaimed:—"I don't know what ecstatic elation has come over me."

Ages ago I gave you that name Brahmanand, and even now the spell of that name is over you. On you no word is misspent. How auspicious was the hour which united me with you. What-



Mahatma—(age 80)

ever untoward events may have happened, nothing has succeeded in severing our union. It has pleased God to delegate to you the task of uniting the devoted Brotherhood. You are engrossed in this work—no other work is so sweet to you as this. The Lord has lavished his gifts on you without stint, but you have put on the beggar's garb, and yet are doing the work of myriads of wealthy men. When I ascend from this mountain of snows to the Abode of Immortal Bliss, I shall await you there—There the father puts off his fatherhood, the mother her motherhood—inequalities are at an end, and all are united in one common bond of love.

Your devoted
Debendra Nath Tagore
Masuri Hills

FROM KESHUB CHANDRA SEN

SIMLA
27th September, 1883

PRANAM TO MY REVERED FATHER

Last year I made my Pranam this year again I send you my respectful greetings from the Himalayas which you will oblige me by accepting. I hear you are not enjoying good health. How I wish I were by your side to nurse you. Since a long time I have felt this longing—is there no chance of its being fulfilled? My heart and soul are already united with you still what I desire most is to serve you in person, and so satisfy the demands of filial reverence. If it be the will of the loving Lord that I should cherish my feelings from a distance I bow to His decree. I have now been enjoying to my heart's content the sweet and charming spectacle of Brahma-lila. As days go by I stand awe-struck before this dazzling spectacle within and without. How wonderful! I am led to think that a thing like this is unique in this world—how fortunate we are that we should be here to witness such a scene which is one to be coveted even by the Devas. Who would have thought it possible that the Being who is without form the great—

the Infinite—should manifest Himself in this manner. Now by His grace such a glorious manifestation is in progress before the eyes of these poor unfortunate countrymen of mine. The Infinite, the Eternal Being is within our grasp. What was it in the past, and what do we now see ! The Himalayas have awakened. The stream of devotion is flowing onward from the Ganges This land of Bharat has put on a new garb New forms of beauty abound all over the country The name of Brahma is being proclaimed in solemn tones in some places, in sweet strains in others My heart cannot rest without sending forth a responsive echo. This is all the doing of Yogeshwara In Yoga there is joy, in Yoga there is salvation—Yoga is the only thing the heart pants after. Come, father, let us drink deep of this Spirit of blessed Communion with the Lord and giver of Life

Awaiting your blessings
Your humble servant
Keshub Chandra Sen

REPLY.

DEAREST BRAHMANAND,

I cannot write much now, a few more days and I shall altogether cease to write I feel that the time of my leaving this world is drawing near. At this supreme moment, I am sending you a Sloka from the Gita as my parting gift, be so good as to accept it. (The Sloka* is about the saving virtues of concentration of mind and meditation on the Supreme Being at the dying moment)

On Earth below, in heaven above,
His glorious name resounds ;
The Mercy of the blessed Lord
Thro' all the world abounds.

By His grace you have attained Divine wisdom—Wonderful is your insight ! Wonderful are your words ! Long may you live to spread the sweet name of Brahma throughout the land. "O Tongue

go forth and proclaim His glory ; Eye. do not lose sight of His entrancingly beautiful countenance, gaze on it without ceasing."

Your sincere well-wisher
Debendra Nath Tagore
Masuri Hills.

P. S.

I shall be glad to get news of your health from time to time.

* कविं पुराणमनुशासितारं अशीरब्दीयांसमनुष्मरेद्य-
सर्वस्य धातारमन्त्रिरूपं आदित्यवर्चं तमसः परस्तात् ।
प्रयागकाले मनसा-चक्षेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगवलेक चेव
सुखी मध्ये प्राच-माविश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यं॥

This was my father's last letter to Keshub Chandra and here is Keshub's last letter in reply

CANANPUE,
11th October, 1883.

MY PRANAMS TO THE FEET OF MY FATHER

I was detained by illness on the road, hence the delay in reaching this station To-day is Thursday, I arrived here at 2 o'clock early in the morning I was delighted to get your affectionate letter of Ashirbad on Tuesday What should I write about my health ? I don't wish to make you anxious. I have no longer that health. that strength I was wont to enjoy Broken down, stricken by diseases, I am getting weaker, and weaker, and sinking day by day I am now under a Hakim's treatment All this is His sport—it is His mysterious way of drawing one closer to Him I am lost in perplexity, and can only look up to the sweet face of the Good Lord Sweet is the garden of Yoga—there your beautiful bird Hafiz flits about The sorrows and trials of life are without end, as you know well. But amid all sorrows and tribulations, there reigns the True, the Good, the Beautiful. The light of

Love and Bliss seems to pierce through this Cimmerian darkness. The Lord's mercy on this miserable creature has been manifold. What more should I say ? Accept my hearty thanks for your kind present I shall be much obliged if you will write to me from time to time at your convenience. Anyway, I hope you will keep me in remembrance

Ever yours,
Keshub Chandra Sen

My father wrote his last letter under the apprehension that he had not many more days of this life before him, and he wished long life to Brahmanand to carry out his important mission. It was however the unexpected that happened in this case, and Keshub was the first to pass away from this world. My father recovered from his serious illness, and was able to come to Calcutta and see his beloved disciple once more. The declining years of Keshub Chandra Sen were years of intense suffering, and full of many disappointments. His death came at last suddenly, though not unexpectedly. He died on January 8th, 1884, surrounded by his nearest relations and friends, my father being one of those that gathered round his death-bed.

Professor Max Muller writes of the relations of my father and his beloved Brahmanand in these terms —

* " His love for Keshub Chandra Sen had never ceased. They had been torn asunder by a torrent, but in their deepest foundation they had always remained one. After Keshub Chandra Sen had been taken away from him by death, the old man addressed the following words to some friends who had come to condole with him :—

' When I had him near me, I considered myself the master of all the wealth which kings of the world could command. When I sat up often till one or two o'clock in the morning, conversing with my departed friend, I never perceived how the time passed. The union between our souls is never to be destroyed '.

* Biographical Essays, p. 84.

D.—SELECT SERMONS*

Sermons from the Book of Vyakhyan—

I.

God, The Creator.

“इदं वा अये नैव किञ्चिदासीत्, सदैव सौख्यं दमय आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् । स वा एष
महानज आत्मा ।

In the beginning there was naught. Before this universe came into being O Beloved, there existed the *one* the only reality, one without a second. He is the Supreme Spirit unborn.

Nothing of this universe so diversified in appearance existed in the remote past, no sign of it was visible anywhere. There was only an all-pervading, dense darkness, ‘तम आसीत्तमसा गूढमये.’ darkness alone existed enveloped in darkness. He alone existed who is the light of darkness—the Supreme Spirit the Essence (Sat). One only without a second. When there was no light but only darkness at that time the Supreme Spirit whose light is of knowledge, shone in all His glory. If all lights were extinguished, if the sun set never to rise again, if all stars and planets were annihilated, the self-luminous Spirit would yet exist. He was manifest before creation. He exists now as the life of all creation, and should creation decay in time, He would still exist. He exists through all time—from eternity to eternity. “ईशानीमतमज्यस्य सर्वव्यस उच्यते” He is the ordainer of the past and of the future. He is the same to-day as he will be to-morrow. He alone is real, and in his hands he holds the events of the past and of the future. He is beyond time and space. He is subject neither to space, nor to time. It is He who has strung together all the worlds of this universe with the threads of time and space. The universe exists pervading all time and space and all time and space with all the universe exist, pervading God.

When there was nothing but darkness without end, that ancient Being alone existed, shining with the light of knowledge. What a profoundly solemn aspect did that time present! When, from the brow of a hill, during a dark night in the rains, we behold the sky black with thick clouds, with not a star or a planet visible,

* From the Book of Sermons—Brâhma Dharma Vyakhyana

a dead silence reigning over all Nature, and darkness all around us,—then with thrilling nerves, and mind deeply moved, we feel the presence of that self-existing Ancien. One, who alone was manifest in the light of His knowledge and truth, before the birth of the universe, in the midst of primeval darkness.

सतपातयत सतपत्तया इद सर्वमसृजत यदिदं किञ्च । Naught was there in the beginning the Lord willed, and all that is came into being. He created the effulgent sun, and darkness was dispelled. After that night of incalculable ages, with what wonderful beauty did that first morning shine forth ! Piercing through that long and silent night, whence came the newborn luminary ? How did it come to be clothed with its thousand rays, and to illumine all the corners of the sky ? It was only by the will of that First Cause, the Lord of all, that the sun was brought forth. At His will this beautiful world of ours, full of energy, came into being, and commenced to rotate round the sun. The world knew not who sent it and why it was sent. Who could have known that this world which was then covered with hot molten metallic substances, like live coal, and filled with gaseous vapours, with its atmosphere enveloped in masses of clouds—that such a world should eventually be adorned most wonderfully with life and joy, light and beauty, and be filled with numberless living creatures, and innumerable species of plant life ? Who was it that sowed in this world the seeds of all these things ? Who created it as the store-house of an infinite variety of mineral wealth, grains, flowers and fruits ? There shines the sun millions of miles away from us, here rolls the earth in its orbit, and on its surface are all these animals and plants ! But yet from that far-off sun comes the light which illumines the world, and makes the stream of life flow, and dispels our blindness. Who is it that has established such relationship between the earth and the sun ? Is it the work of an insensate power ? This life, this vitality, this wealth of various possessions, this happiness which we enjoy—are all these showered on us by a blind power ? No, it is by the will of that Being who is All-wise and All-good, that all this that is, has come into being. God meditated, and then implanted in it those diverse and wonderful forces that gradually rendered the once hot, lifeless and desolate world a home and a place of comfort.

such as it is now In course of time the earth cooled, and became the dwelling-place of many living creatures, and the home of many pleasures The vapours condensed into clouds, and poured down as cool water, wherein fishes and reptiles and other kinds of aquatic animals lived and moved and had their being Mountains rose up from amidst the waters and lifting up their heads towards the sun, proclaimed the glory of the Lord The earth came to have two divisions, land and water, and many plants and trees and animals were born therein Did all these come to exist of their own accord? Is it all the work of an unthinking power? No, all this is the glory of that All-knowing Supreme Spirit It is He who created and constructed this universe so wonderfully He gave us teeth to masticate our food, and before he gave us teeth He had poured milk into our mother's breast for us to drink and subsist upon What marvellous art is this! How wonderful is His power to preserve and nourish His creatures! Are all these evidences of art the result of the action of blind forces? Do they not manifest knowledge and wisdom? Do they not bear on them the proof of the will and thought of an intelligent being?

Who is it that is rearing us with such infinite care? Who is that merciful Being who has created various medicines to cure and relieve the maladies we suffer from? When the soul becomes impure and is overcome with sin, who is it that sends repentance to it and thereby saves it from sin? All this is done by Him who is our eternal Father and who by His unfailing succour keeps us in the right path What fear have we? As He is the sovereign of all things material, so is He the sovereign of the soul, as He is the Lord of the universe, so is He mine also We live on His bounty, and from Him we obtain all pleasures and all happiness And when we offer Him our hearts filled with gratitude, how our pleasures and happiness are sanctified thereby! Prosperity enables us to behold the Lord's benign countenance, adversity like a preceptor teaches us noble lessons and leads us unto Him, and then adversity becomes to us the highest prosperity. Adversity and prosperity are linked together like winter and spring, but whatever be the state in which we find ourselves, if we make righteousness our shelter and

put our trust in the Lord, then the strength and power of the soul will never be spent, and the peace that is its heritage will never be lost.

O Supreme Spirit, preserve the peace of our soul and take us all under the protecting shadow of Thy goodness Help my fellow-worshippers to advance in Thy path, illumine my motherland with the light of Thy knowledge, refresh the world with the waters of peace, and turn the minds of us all to Thy worship

II

“न तं विदाथ यदमा जजानान्यत् युष्माकमन्तरं वभूव ।

नीहारेण प्राहता जन्वाचामहपञ्चकथशासचरन्ति ॥”

(ऋग्वेदः १ म. ६ अ. ८३ सू. १)

“Him ye know not who created all this world, Who dwelleth in your souls distinct from all else Ye go about the world enveloped in a cloud, engaged in wrangling, addicted to the pleasures of life, and engrossed in ceremonial observances ”

(O Men, Him you know not, who created heaven and earth and all that is in them By His will the sun shines and illumines this world, by His will the moon sheds her ambrosial light by night nourishing plants and trees, by His will at the close of the summer-season the clouds driven by the wind, pour down welcome showers to allay the heat, by His will rivers flow from snowy mountains to irrigate and fertilize the earth, by His will the trees of the forest and the garden put forth flowers breathing delightful fragrance, and bear fruits delicious to the taste, by His will the mother-earth supports countless beings with her inexhaustible stores of fruitful harvests, by His will a mother's love, flowing out with the milk of her breast, sustains the life of her infant, by His will man, endowed with wisdom and righteousness, has risen higher than brutes in the scale of existence; by His will heaven and earth, the minutes and the hours, the years and the seasons run on smoothly in their several courses Alas ! you know Him not, though He dwells within your inmost souls

"Yushmakam Antaram Vabhuva"

He dwelleth within you, distinct from all else, in the inmost recesses of your souls. The God who dwelleth within your heart of hearts, you know not, and how should you know Him, when you go about the world enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, as in a thick cloud, engaged in vain wrangling, allured by pleasures of the senses, and spending your days in a round of useless rites and ceremonies. If you wish to know the Highest, the Para-Brahma, you must enrich your minds with wisdom and knowledge, embrace the truth in word and in deed, bring your senses under the subjection of moral laws, and renouncing all desire for reward, pray and strive for true Salvation (mukti). Such are the precepts of the Rishis of old. The latter-day sages also speak in the same strain —

धिक् धिक् जीवन ब्रह्म न जानी, चक्षुर्दृश्यं मी न उपासी, पास दूर कर नाहीं—

Woe to thy life, that thou shouldst not know *Brahma*, that thou shouldst not worship Him in the sanctuary of thy heart, deeming far One who is so near.

He, who dwelleth within and pervadeth the sky, the sun, moon, and stars, the air, fire, and water, the light and darkness, and ruleth them from within, whose manifestation they are, and yet they know Him not, He is the Being that dwells within each of you, as your inner-soul. This Antaryāmin, the inner-guide, the immortal Being, is in close contact with our souls. He cannot be touched with the external hand, but we can feel Him and realise His presence in our souls. The Yogi, who detaches himself from the world, enjoys the boundless happiness of transcendental communion with *Brahma*. He is 'Arupa,' without form and without colour. He is neither white nor yellow, nor blue nor red, this formless and colourless Being is by no means visible to the fleshly eye, but to the eye of wisdom He is revealed as the embodiment of joy and immortality. The blessed saint who has seen His form of Truth and Love, remains absorbed in his Beloved for ever and ever. The beauty of that Supreme Love is beyond compare. It knows no increase nor decrease. The resplendent sun and moon, the torest blooming with flowers, the lily

of the lake with its multiple petals, (satadala), all earthly Youth, Beauty and Grace, are but faint reflections of that divine Beauty. The love that is fixed on that Beauty never fades. He is without Rasa (flavour), and cannot be tasted as we taste water, fruit or honey, but He is 'Rasa' itself, the very essence of sweetness. He, who has tasted that essence is blessed with joy everlasting. He is without odour (Agandha) but the morning flowers are charged with balmy fragrance by coming in contact with Him, He is without sound (Asavda), but He dwelleth in the souls of men and women and silently conveyeth these Commandments to their conscience —

Speak the Truth—Do the right. Righteousness is the highest of all, and is honey-sweet for all. Thou shalt not earn money by unjust means. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's riches, nor be jealous of his good fortune. Forgive one another's trespasses. Thou shalt not commit adultery, nor indulge in intoxicating drink. Acquire knowledge with diligence. Bear thy burden of duty with patience. Be moderate in food and recreation. Do thy house-work with cheerfulness and wifely devotion. Forbear from quarrelling, wrangling and foolish talk. Be queen of thy household, devoted to good works and armed with self-control. Obey and honour thine elders. Pity the poor and down-trodden. Give up extravagant and miserly habits. Neglect not thy temporal and spiritual welfare. Shrink not from sacrificing life itself at the call of Duty.

Such are the silent admonitions of the Spirit in every soul. He who performs his life-work in obedience to these commandments, conquers death. What though his body be slain, he reaches the immortal regions, bearing the Life of his life within his soul.

This Supreme Spirit cannot be known by fine speech, nor by the understanding, nor by much learning. He alone knows, unto whom the Spirit reveals Himself. And knowing Him, he is fired with zeal and enthusiasm to proclaim the glory of his Beloved. And to whom doth He reveal Himself? To him who hungers and thirsts after the Lord, doth He reveal himself in His infinite Majesty.

O worship Him, the Infinite Spirit, the First Cause uncreate, whose works these are. Let us worship in a tranquil spirit, Him who is Peace and Rest.

III.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

य आत्मनि विद्यमानोऽन्तरो यमात्मा न वेद यस्मात्मा प्रवीर य आत्मकमन्त्रो
यमयति एष त आत्मन्त्याम्बुधतः ॥

"He who dwelleth in and within the soul, whose image the soul is, who ruleth it from within and yet it knows Him not. He is the Inner guide (Antaryāmin), the Immortal "

What a blessing it is for us that we are able to sanctify our souls by worshipping the Holy of holies in this sacred morning hour! Holiness, and illumination of the spirit can only come from His worship. He is enthroned for ever in every soul, and it is his presence that sanctifies it. Whenever the soul strays away from the Supreme Spirit it is filled with sorrow, stricken with decay, and consumed by unholy desires. But as we cherish God within our souls, we are purified and sanctified. Where is this Supreme Spirit? He is not far to seek. He is in close contact with every one of us. He is within our souls.

He who dwelleth in and within the soul and sanctifieth it, whose image the soul is, who ruleth it from within and yet the soul knoweth Him not, He is the Inner guide, the Immortal. This is the saying of one of our ancient Rishis the inspired utterance of that brave and high-souled Rishi, Yajñavalkya, and we find it in the white Yajurveda, Madhvandina Sākhā. We cannot find God by travelling in distant countries or making arduous pilgrimages. Those who seek Him in the external world, come away disappointed. Things of the spirit cannot be seen in a visible form in the outer world. He alone sees Him, who looks for Him in the inner sanctuary of the soul. If God had fixed His abode in the highest Heaven, far far away from us, how should we have reached Him there? But it is not necessary to travel far and wide in order to see Him. Whenever we bring our minds under control, and turn our eye inward, calm and undistracted, we see Him enshrined in our innermost souls.

We have not to go far to see Him—who dwelleth within our souls. As however the body has to exert itself in order to go a

great distance, so in the act of self-introspection, it is necessary that the mind should strive with energy. Training the mind is a far harder task than mortifying the flesh. Whatever else you may do, the one thing necessary in order to realize God within the soul, is self-discipline. One must be calm and serene, patient and self possessed, in order to attain the desired end. We may arrive at a certain destination by walking hundreds of miles, but though the soul is nearest to us of all, yet it is extremely difficult to reach it, after overcoming worldly distractions. Our attention varies according to the strength of our desire. God's presence within the soul cannot be realised without the utmost desire and concentration of the mind. But the task, however difficult, must be accomplished. Why come to the house of worship, if you go away empty-hearted without seeing God? If we should fail to realise His presence in our souls, or turn to Him with love and reverence, our object in coming here is wholly frustrated.

What are the attributes of this soul, wherein dwells the Supreme Spirit? Let us consider the question attentively. We have it in the Vedas "अथ वा वेदेद जिघ्राणीति स आत्मा, गन्धाय त्राण" That which knows 'I smell this,' that is the soul, the nose is but the instrument of smelling. "अथ वा वेदेद अभिव्याशोति स आत्मा, अभिव्याहाराय वाक्" That which knows 'I speak,' that is the soul, the tongue is but the instrument of speech. "अथ यो वेदेद शृण्वतीति स आत्मा, श्रवणाय श्रोत्रं" That which knows 'I hear,' that is the soul, the ear is but the instrument of hearing. "अथ यो वेदेद मनोऽस्मिन् देवं चक्षुः" that which knows 'I think,' that is the soul, the mind is its divine eye, the internal eye by which it sees. The soul is neither hand nor foot, nor eye nor ear, nor is it the organs of smell or speech. The soul is that which sees with the eye, hears with the ear, grasps with the hand, walks with the feet. When, through meditation, we come to know the soul, we become privileged to see the Supreme Spirit. As we cannot see the master of the house without entering it, so we must go into the chamber of the soul before we can see the Lord, its master. It is from the knowledge of the self, the Ego, that we rise to the knowledge of God. Hence it behoves thee, first of all, to know Thyself, the self that sees,

feels, hears, thinks, understands. Now on what does this soul rest ? To this question the answer is that the soul rests in the eternal, the Supreme Spirit ' व परे अक्षरे आत्मनि सन्निविष्टे ।' When the human soul feeling itself to be homeless, seeks its life's refuge,—and calm, tranquil and chastened by discipline, becomes pure and undefiled, then it sees God within and hears his thrilling, living Voice "अहं ब्रह्मास्मि" 'I am Brahman in thy soul—Take refuge in Me and thou shalt be free from sin and anguish' We can not hear that soul-stirring voice, that sweet, consoling message with our bodily ear, but it can be heard when we are absorbed in contemplation and inspired by spiritual wisdom

‘जिस ने तू जानाया मोहि जन जाने

हृदिगुण सदहि आख बाखाने

O Lord, he alone knows, to whom thou revealest thyself. And knowing Thee he sings Thy praises for ever

The Supreme Spirit dwells within light and darkness, within the sun and moon but the light and darkness, the sun and moon know Him not. He also dwells in the soul of man, and the soul knows Him not though to it has been vouchsafed the privilege of knowing him. When by purity of life and spiritual culture the soul attains to a state in which it is filled with a deep yearning after the Lord so that it cannot do without Him—to such a pure and devout soul doth the Lord reveal Himself. () seek Him the indwelling spirit, within thy soul and not in the empty space. As blood and breath are the life of the body, so the life of the soul is God. Blessed is he who hath entered into holy communion with this Brahman. Such fellowship, commenced here on earth, never ends. Even though the body lies here forsaken, the soul enters into life everlasting, and attains all its desires in union with the Eternal सोऽयुते सर्वान् कामान् सह ब्रह्मणा विपश्चिता । Such a union is the crown of our desires, our heaven, our salvation

नायमात्मा प्रश्ननेन लभ्यते न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन । यमेवैव ह्यनुते तेन लभ्यमानस्यैव आत्मा ह्यनुते तन् स्वा ।

This Supreme Spirit cannot be known by fine speech, nor by keen intelligence, nor by much learning. He alone knows, who seeks Him

with fervent prayer and unswerving devotion To such a seeker the Lord reveals Himself, and all his desires are fulfilled. Oh ! Arise, awake, hie thee to His door with a humble and sincere heart, and thy prayer will be answered The temptations and fascinations of the world will come to an end, thou shalt have joy to thy right, and enjoyment to thy left, and thy soul shall sing pæans of His love in ecstasy. O ! Harken to His low and solemn voice, as dwelling within the finite soul, he uttereth these words—Aham Brahmasmi—I am The Brahman.

IV

God's Omnipresence

यस्मिंश्चित् चरति यश्च वचति यो निनाय चरति य प्रतद्वत्

द्वीपमिषय यन्मन्त्रयेते राजा तद् द वरुणस्तृतीयः

उतेयं मुनि वरुणस्य राज उतासौद्यौ हं हती दूरे अन्ता

उतो समुद्रौ वरुणस्य कुक्षौ उतास्मिन्नस्य उदके निनीन ।

अथर्ववेद ४ अ ७ प्र ।

Whoso moves, stands, or rests, whoso seeks a hiding place in dark cells and lonely caves, King *Varuna* knows it all If two sit together and scheme, King *Varuna* is there as the third and perceives it also—राजा तद् द वरुणस्तृतीयः । Nothing lies hidden, none can remain concealed from Him Whosoever hides in dark recess or lurks in secret cell, *Varuna* detects him and spies his movements. If any two men should hold good or evil counsel among themselves, the King is there, a third, and sees it all Realizing God's perpetual presence in your midst, fear to commit sin, and zealously devote yourselves to the performance of good works Remember that the Father and Mother of us all is always with us, watching all our movements. No sin that we commit can ever remain hidden from Him Let His presence deter you from evil deeds, and His loving and encouraging eyes impel you to deeds of righteousness When we do good, His benign countenance is revealed unto us, and the fierceness of His wrath alights upon our evil actions He knows when we are doing wrong, and when we are walking in righteousness,

and metes out his rewards and punishments according to our deserts

एकोऽहमस्मिन्मात्रे यत्तु कल्याणमन्यसे—Friend, thou thinkest thou art alone, but it is not so

निखं स्थितं ते हृदये पुरुषोपापेक्षिता मुनि That all-seeing witness sitteth enthroned in thy heart, looking on at thy good and evil deeds

This idea is clearly expressed in our text of the *Atharvaveda*. Whoever moves or stands or rests, whoever seeks a hiding place in caves and cells, *Varuna* knows it all. Where two persons are closeted together in secret council, He is there a third. He is the fourth amongst three, the fifth among four, the sixth among five. If a hundred people are here gathered together, then you must add one more to the number so as to include Him.

Who is this king *Varuna*? He is described in the following *Mantra*: इयं अस्मिन्वर्षस्य राज्ञः This boundless Earth is king *Varuna*'s. He is the Ruler of the whole universe. How strange it is that men should deem themselves kings by holding sway over the petty kingdoms of this Earth. How baseless is their pride! How empty their title! *Varuna* is the real king, not of this Earth only, but also of yonder vast sky, whose bounds are far away. The two oceans of air and water find a place within his body, and are supported by Him. He is not only in the deep sea, but in this minute drop of water is he also hidden—अस्मिन्मत्स्योदके निवर्तते ।

He who is the Ruler of Heaven and Earth who permeates all things, great and small, He is the God of our worship. He who is king of the whole earth and the infinite heavens, He who is immanent in the oceans of air and water, smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, who is in the endless sky as also in this tiny drop of water, He is the God of our worship. He who is with us always, who encourages and rewards all righteous deeds, who, when we succumb to sin, delivers us from evil after punishing our transgressions, He is the God of our worship.

Long ages ago, our *Rishis* in the *Atharva Veda* gave utterance to truths to which we still give the assent of our whole heart, and which arouse feelings of the deepest reverence. In this *Mantra* of *Atharvaveda* how clearly we perceive God as the universal witness.

The ancient *Rishis* have given express'ion to those thoughts that are nearest to our hearts Truth is by no means confined to any particular period in the world's history, but reveals itself at all times As sparks fly out of the fire, as rays of light radiate from the sun, so Truth ever flows from God, its fountainhead Holy and devout men cannot fail to attain spiritual truths whenever, by piety and purity of character, they prepare the ground for their reception Truth flows from Goâ without ceasing, but alas ! few are the men fit to receive it.

What a blessing it is for us, born as we are in this unfortunate land, that we are able to worship the true God, the Infinite Brahman What a blessing it is that we should come here to worship Him who is the ruler of the whole universe, Lord of men and *Devas*, to worship Him and be sanctified by His holy presence This is indeed a blessed hour, a supreme moment of holy communion (*Brahma-muhurta*) As, seated in the heart of the sun, He illumines the whole world by its rays, in the same way, dwelling within our souls, He inspires our understanding and strengthens our conscience With Him, our worshipful Lord, we are united by bonds of eternal fellowship Brethren, let us fulfil our life's mission by worshipping Him together, with love and reverence

V

The Revelation of God in the
Human Soul

“न तत्र सूर्योभाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्यतोभान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्व्वं
तस्य भासा सर्व्वमिदं विभाति ॥”

The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, much less this fire When He shines, everything shines after Him : by His light all this is lighted.

O Master, asked the disciple, how can I know God, the blissful who has not been defined, whose infinite Majesty

cannot be explained by words and is beyond our conception, and yet who is realized by those earnest seekers after truth who are devoted to Him? Who or what is there that can reveal Him? The Guru answered, "The sun, the moon and the stars cannot reveal God, nor these lightnings, much less this fire. In the bright presence of God, the sun and the moon lose themselves, and they and every other lesser light become dark. It is only the light of the soul that can reveal the Lord. From the light of the soul you can have a faint idea of that Light of Truth." But what is this light of the soul? Look into your inner self, with the utmost attention of a mind abstracted from outward objects and you will realize what the light of the soul is. "अस्तमिते आदित्ये," when the sun is set, 'चन्द्रमसि अस्तमिते,' when the moon is not visible in the sky, "आग्ने अग्नौ," when the fire is extinguished what is the light that remains? It is only the light of the soul that is then visible. Realize this truth even at this very moment. We have not now the light of the sun, for the sun has set; nor have we here the light of the moon, the only light we have here is that given by fire—the light of lamps. Imagine all these lamps to have been put out, we shall then be in the midst of utter darkness. After the lamps in this hall are extinguished, should one and all present here remain as calm and silent as they are now, they would not know one another, lightless and soundless as this edifice would then be. But though we may all then remain in the midst of darkness and silence, the light within us—the light of the soul, will not be extinguished. Every one present here will then see his own self, the effulgence of the soul will shine the brighter in the midst of that gloom. With the light of the soul, that Light of Truth will also reveal itself, with the soul will be manifested its Cause, its Refuge, its Friend, its immortal Lord, who knows all that passes within it. He whom the sun and the moon cannot reveal, is revealed by the light of the soul. How ignorant is he who seeks Him in the light that illumines the external world. In the external or material universe, we only behold the mere shadow of the Lord's wisdom and goodness, but within us is His light. In the soul of man is He most brightly manifested. When the light of the Divine Sun shineth on the soul, that resplendent sheath of perfection, what

happens then? The effect is just the same as when sometimes in the early morning the sun and the moon are found shining together. We then see that the moon is manifested by the light reflected by the sun. So shines the soul of man by the light of God. The life of the human soul, its piety, its knowledge, its love, are but reflections of the Supreme Soul. He alone stands revealed as the primary cause and sole support of the soul. Can one regard one's self when the sun of the Supreme Soul shineth in the firmament of one's inmost being? Can the moon be bright under the dazzling light of the sun? All our littlenesses are dispelled by the light of the beauty and immaculate purity of the Lord. As our love of God waxes, our love of self wanes. Thus when love, purified by being centered on God, returns to the earth, how beautiful it appears, and what a radiance it sheds! By its contact with the Lord, love is sanctified, and comes down on earth, and sweetens all places. The human soul realises how impure is its nature when it dissociates itself from God, and how noble it becomes when it is with Him. We are so impotent, that our minds cannot contain even the momentary revelation of God but even such momentary revelation has the effect of renewing our life. Like the lightning the Lord shows Himself, and then instantly disappears, but we cherish the hope that although here he offers us His embrace only at long intervals, hereafter we shall be perpetually locked within His embrace. It is indeed not an insignificant earnest of the future that, although we are weak and frail, and burdened by sin, and smarting under remorse, we can yet behold God revealed to us, though only for a few moments. This demonstrates the Lord's beneficent intention to give Himself more freely to us in future. We consider ourselves blessed for the privilege we enjoy at present of beholding God momentarily; but how supremely blessed will be our lot when we shall be able to enjoy this privilege for longer spaces of time! What would we not give in order to attain that condition? When the vision of God granted to us in this earthly life, is as evanescent as lightning, and yet mighty enough to induce the absolute upheaval of the whole tenor of our life, then what supreme good shall we not attain when He will shine before

our eyes like the sun, without ceasing? ' Now we see through a glass darkly " but a time will come when the Sun of Righteousness will shine perpetually over the inner being and we shall behold Him face to face without a break. And for this divine affinity we are being trained in this life. We ought frequently to gauge to what extent the Supreme Soul is manifested in our soul how far our union with God has been consummated, and what sacrifices we have been able to make for Him. We need not be anxious about the riches we acquire, or the honour or distinction or fame we attain. Calculate how much you have hoarded of that treasure which is imperishable. You attain in this life all you covet, when you gain this treasure. Why should we not rejoice at the hope that we are destined to inherit the treasure which is everlasting, to partake of that supreme good which will not pass away? Why should not that enable you to slight worldly adversity and prosperity? What a blessing it is that we shall hereafter behold the Lord, whom neither the sun nor the moon can reveal manifested as clearly as the sun or the moon! Experience in this world gives us a foreglimpse of this beatitude. When such enjoyment of God becomes a ceaseless and perpetual reality, what then is misery to us, or pang of bereavement? Then we can endure all misery and affliction and our body, if feeble, becomes strengthened and our mind, if without vigor, becomes invigorated. Can the hope of this blessedness, that is to come hereafter be without any potency, without any influence on our mind? Is it not our guide on the road that leads to the mysterious and eternal future? Where experience harmonizes with hope, can the gloom of scepticism linger?

VI

OUR HOPE OF IMMORTALITY

“ येनाहं नाशता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्यात् । ”

‘ What shall I do with that which cannot make me immortal ’

When the devout Rishi Yajnavalkya was dividing his wealth and property among his wife, the pious Maitreyi, and other relatives,

preparatory to his renunciation of the life of a house-holder, Maitreyi asked of the Rishi, "O Husband, if all this wide world be replenished with gold and silver, and I become its owner, can it gain for me immortality?" "नेति नेति होवाच याज्ञवल्करः"—Yajnavalka answered "No no, that it cannot,"—"यथेवोपकरणवता जीवितं तथैव ते जीवितं स्यात्"—"as the worldling's life is passed with certain things necessary for earthly existence, so shall be your life," "अमृतस्य तु न शान्तिरिति"—"there is no hope for immortality from gold and silver" The Eternal and the True cannot be acquired by things that are transitory and unreal "न ह्यमृतं प्राप्यते हि म्रुवं तत् ।" Having heard this answer Maitreyi exclaimed, "येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कर्ष्ये?"—what shall I do with that which cannot make me immortal, which cannot save me, and by which I cannot obtain God.

Every individual is subject at times to that longing which Maitreyi felt when she put the question to her Rishi-husband. When the high aim of life dawns on the mind, and we discover that we are far from realising it, we feel a void in us which the world with all its joys cannot fill, and a deep, inward sense of unrest which all its wealth cannot allay. Then, as the hart, tormented by thirst, seeks the brook, so do we everywhere seek the Lord. At the same time a desire is born in us to keep ourselves pure and chaste, for we become conscious of the truth that He whom we seek is pure and holy, and impervious to sin. No sooner do I immolate my sinful propensities at the altar of God, and open the doors of the heart for Him to enter, than I behold Him installed therein. Such is the bond of union between God and the human soul. So long as the aim of the soul is steadfast towards Him, as is the needle of the compass towards the Polar star, we can have no fear. Even when all around us waves rise high, and storms rage, and dangers beset us, and sadness afflicts us, we surmount all obstacles and overcome all misery, only by the continued blessed vision of His countenance.

Brethren, be on your guard that you may not swerve from the high end and aim of life. Let not your will be divided in twain. Ye should have one will and one single aim. The will to obtain Him should be supreme in you, and all your desires should

be subordinated to it. God is your only aim—He who is Ekamevadviyam, One without a second. Serve the world as we may, let us keep God above everything, without Him not all the riches of the world can satisfy us. And as we spurn the pleasures of this world, so we cease to hanker after enjoyment in the next. The bountiful Giver of all joy and happiness alone knoweth with what means of enjoyment He has equipped the spheres of Heaven for us, but we feel that if we can but obtain Him there, then we shall have all our desires gratified, and we shall have all the wealth we are in search of. It is not Heaven or Hell that we are thinking of, but God, and we are seeking Him only. So long as we exist, may we exist with the Lord, and may we enjoy more and more the holy joy of His company, as we go on progressing from a lower to a higher sphere of existence; that is our only aspiration.

O Supreme Spirit, when it is Thou who inspirest us with these hopes and aspirations, we know for certain that they will not be falsified. Here we are brought into union with Thee, may we, through everlasting ages, dwell with Thee and advance in the path of Salvation. Such is the hope we cherish, and we look to Thee for the fulfilment thereof. Do Thou fulfil it O Lord.

VII

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्य मीत-

स्त्री सम्पदीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।

तयोः श्रेय आददानस्य साधु भवति

हीयतेऽर्थात् यत्प्रेयो वृथीते ।

“The Good and the Pleasant solicit men, the wise ponder over and distinguish between them. Blessed is he who clings to the good; he who chooses the pleasant, misses life's highest end.”

To let the flowers of love and reverence for God bloom in our hearts, to establish a deep, inalienable union between our soul and the supreme Soul, to follow His path and to do His work, this is *Sreyas*—the Good—Righteousness. To be led away by the impulses of an unregulated will, to be absorbed in the pleasures of this world, renouncing God and Religion, this is *P्रेयः*—the Pleasant—Worldliness. If we accept as our guide Righteousness that carries with it all

that is good, it brings us to the presence of God, but if we follow Worldliness in the quest of sensual enjoyment, we reach only the degrading depths of the worldling.

अथ कुर्यान्न्यदुतेष प्रेयस्

ते तमे नामार्थं पुरुषं सिनीत ।

“ The Good is one thing, the Pleasant another. These two attract the heart of man towards two different paths. Righteousness maketh us walk in the path of virtue, which is narrow as the sharp-edged razor, but in the end brings us to the Eternal, the Supreme Spirit, while Worldliness lures us on through a path not of God's, into the world, and flings us into its boiling cauldron. There is the path that brings you sensual pleasure, wealth and renown, rank and power and absolute license, and there is also the path that guides you to a mine of inestimable treasures—self-respect, holiness, God and liberty, of these two paths which would you choose to follow? If you desire to invigorate and elevate your soul to meet the trials and troubles of life, if you wish to be blessed with the smiles of a clear conscience, if your heart be fixed upon the Lord and pants after Him, then follow the path of Righteousness. Righteousness shall liberate you from the tangled knots that bind your heart to the world and bring you to the all-embracing Love the infinite Holiness and Beauty of the Supreme Spirit. The path of Righteousness is the path for man, the path of Righteousness is the path for the *Devas*, the path we have to tread through Eternity, let us then give to Righteousness a place in our heart, and shun Worldliness from afar. O my young friends, put yourselves on your guard, and learn to tread the path of life with caution from the very dawn of your youth. You are in that period of life when the eyes of intelligence are keen and bright, when the body and mind are full of energy and enthusiasm, take heed that, notwithstanding these safe-guards at your command, you fall not into the dark pit of Worldliness, which lies hidden covered with green grass, beneath your feet. Hark! the voice of Righteousness calleth, “ Come unto me, I will lead thee to the all-resplendent world of *Brahman* the Supreme Spirit ”

In our heart rages the fierce contest between Good and Pleasure, between Righteousness and Worldliness. We live on the confines of these two contending elements. On one side is the Siren of Worldly pleasure, using all her bewitching arts to drag us down into the slough of the world, on the other is the Angel of Righteousness who, filled with a mother's love, clasps our hands, and is eager to lead us to the land of Immortality. The Siren of Worldliness, with poison in her heart but honey on her lips, comes to us and tempts us saying —

शतायुष पुत्र पौत्रान् वृणीष्व

वहन् पशून् हस्तिं हिरण्यमश्वान् ।

Accept from me sons and grandsons who shall live a hundred years, here are gold, herds of cattle, elephants, horses and equipages, all ready for thee. Follow me, and fragrant breezes shall cool thy body, in thy palace song and dance, laughter and merriment, shall perennially scatter gladness and joy, sweet perfumes shall thrill thy senses, charming damsels shall serve and attend on thee, men shall prostrate themselves at thy feet, thou shalt be the master of all, thou shalt be the ruler over extensive kingdoms, and thy fame shall spread through all lands. Accept me and I will fill the cup of thy desires." The pure-hearted resolute youth heard these words of evil counsel, but remained unmoved and calm as the solemn ocean, and answered thus —

सर्वन्द्रियाणाम् जरयन्ति तेजः ।

"The temptations thou wouldst lead me into would wear out the vigour of all my senses, our longest life is brief, death is lurking behind me, and on the slightest pretence it will rob me of my life and all my possessions, so keep thou thy horses and equipages, keep thy songs and dances for thyself. Nothing whatever that thou canst give me will ever satisfy me.

न विस्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्यः ।

No man can be made happy by wealth. My heart cannot rest in transient mortal things. I look back upon my past life and can find

no gazing of true happiness, nothing but sorrow and grief and anguish, and gazing into the future I can discern that the world will never give me the joy that is born of peace. I shall not, therefore, be any more deceived by thy tempting promises, and be whiled along the tortuous paths of the world. But if thou hast anything in thy gift so lovely and beautiful, that by loving it I can love all the world besides, and all the love of my heart may find the fullest satisfaction, yet never become exhausted, if thou hast any boon so precious, then place it in my hands, I pray thee, that my restless soul may be soothed and comforted. Oh grant this my earnest prayer, and I shall remain thy devoted slave for ever." Puzzled by these words, the Enchantress glided away in gloomy silence. Left to himself, that noble youth found his mental horizon dark and dismal, and was overpowered by its depressing aspect. True, the temptations of the world had departed, but the cravings of his soul were not yet satisfied. He was plunged into an ocean of misery, for neither the pleasures of the world nor the joys of heaven were his. Life seemed to wear to him the grim, sombre appearance of the graveyard. How dreadful is this state in a man's life, when he has no appetite for the pleasures of the world, neither does he enjoy the fellowship of God. Then we experience a deep craving for God, but fail to discern the means of satisfying it. Then we become restless like the panting hart, and pass through the direst tribulations of life. With a heart sore distressed, we eagerly ask of all whom we meet, the way to save ourselves from the torments of this fiery ordeal, but no answer do we get that can afford solace to the mind, that can satisfy the panting heart. When fallen into such a plight the forlorn and miserable youth wept and bewailed, when being without a refuge he sought the Refuge of life, then the white-robed Angel of Righteousness appeared before him, and soothed him with these words:—"Why dost thou mourn? Why, consumed with grief and bereft of peace, dost thou roam in the wilderness? Behold the image of love and goodness of Him whose love keeps the universe alive, and turn your tears of grief into tears of love and joy. Secure peace of soul by wholly giving thyself up to Him who is worthy of our highest devotion and love, the treasure of whose love, once possessed, en-

dureth for ever. Awake ' arise from the sleep of infatuation. I will take thee to the heavenly mansion of the all-loving Lord." The heart of that virtuous youth melted at these loving, lifegiving words of the sweet spirit, and anxiously did he interrogate him thus " Who art thou ? Whence comest thou ? Where shall I go and what shall I do to assuage this tormenting agitation of my soul ? Where is the water of life that will moisten my parched soul ? " In comforting tones the Angel replied, " Behold that all-pervading infinite spirit, in thine inmost being is He present in all His glory, in thy finite soul is that infinite Eternal Being firmly enthroned. Pray with all thy heart that He may reveal Himself to thy spiritual vision, and anon He will manifest His ineffable light before thee, and reveal to thee the straight path of virtue. The *Rishis* of old declare that path to be as the sharp edge of a razor, hard to tread take refuge in the Almighty, and thou shalt find that path easy to follow. In the pursuit of virtue one must be regardless of material comfort or discomfort. Virtue must be striven after for its own sake, whether in prosperity or adversity. Remember that this world is not the goal of human existence, man's present state of living is a state of trial, a state of training and discipline. It is through sorrow and suffering through dangers and perils and self-sacrifice that he advances in the path of virtue, nay, at certain critical junctures, he may even be called upon to lay down his life cheerfully that God's will may be done. I do not tempt thee with vain promises of pleasure. Pleasure or enjoyment is not the end and aim of virtue. Can the transient pleasures of the world—enjoyment that depends on filthy lucre, on flesh and blood, and can be obtained even by foul means,—can this be the reward of that Virtue which receives the homage of angels ? The reward of Virtue is Virtue itself, and the silent approbation of conscience,—its reward is God Himself. Therefore rouse thy drooping spirit, and setting aside all the littleness that is thine, let thy whole heart be suffused with the light of Divine love. Keep nothing for thyself, give up thine all to Him, and thou shalt instantly attain thy heart's desire of seeing the Lord face to face "

Laying to heart these profound, ennobling words of the gracious

spirit, the pure-souled youth placed himself under the protection of the Almighty Lord, and was infinitely blessed by beholding Him in his own soul. The world assumed in his eyes a newer and more gracious aspect, and what had hitherto been to him an aching void, now appeared to be full of a blessed reality. He surrendered his life to the Lord who is the source of life, and, liberated from death, was blessed with life everlasting. Whosoever, like this youth, will follow Righteousness and consecrate his life and mind to God, shall obtain Immortality as surely as he.

VIII

Morning Devotion

Devote your mind to God in this sweet and peaceful hour of the early morning. At such a time the state of our body, mind, and understanding is most favorable for His worship. At all other times our mind is distracted in various directions, and becomes absorbed in diverse objects, but not so at this supremely refreshing hour of the early morning, which reflects so brightly the immaculate picture of God. Within our hearts also there reigns the calmness and the flawless order with which the whole universe performs the work of the Supreme Ordainer. Every aspect of this time, being favorable to divine meditation, leads us unto God. Neglect not a time so holy, and not always at our command, sanctify yourselves by plunging into that all-pervading Ocean of Love, fix your mind on Him who is all-holy, impervious to sin, and the sanctifier of all that is pure and holy. If you be oblivious of God in this sacred place, and at this holy time of the day, and under the favorable conditions that reign here, then when will you remember Him? If you cannot now grasp His immaculate purity, His matchless beauty, which is manifested in the beauty of the morning at this solemn hour, then when will you ever do so? When the fires of the world burn in your veins, when you are cast into the billowy sea of worldly activities, when nothing but the din of the world is audible to you, will you then be able to embrace the Lord so easily as you may now? The boundless joy which our soul now feels in communion with that

Supreme Being, that we shall lose in the midst of worldly life; let us now cool ourselves by bathing in that Ocean of Love, so that we may be fit to endure the fierce heat of the world. In this blessed hour of the morning, as we commune with God, our soul is sanctified and ennobled, but this holy influence will wear off in the midst of life's tumult and confusion. What is the remedy for this? The remedy lies in never neglecting the happy moment when the thought of God is kindled in the soul. Drink at whiles the waters of His holiness so copiously, that you may feel refreshed for a long time to come. Make of your soul a cistern, so that whenever the waters of divine mercy fall on you, they may be stored therein, and not run to waste. Pray always to God that He may shower His mercy more and more abundantly on you. Remain always as deeply attached to Him as we now feel ourselves to be in this holy, peaceful hour, when we are sheltered in His arms. Encompassed by the golden light of the sun, we are worshipping the Lord with our morning incense of prayer and praise, behold Him as brightly manifest as this light of the sun, and keep yourselves devoted to His work. Many and diverse are the thoughts that are rising in our minds at this moment, yet we do not forget that the sun shines. Thus may the light to God pervade all that we do. To those who are occupied with only self, this universe is a place of amusement, a mere play-house. But to those who are animated by the love of God, this universe is a divine and holy temple. They perceive in the existence of this universe, the existence of a higher and nobler Entity, they behold reflected in it His wisdom and His beneficent light. May we never neglect to utilize this holy hour, may it be our constant aim to make all times favorable for seeking God. At every rising and setting of the sun, at the passing of every fortnight and every month, let us reflect on our actual spiritual condition, let us remember that we are approaching our goal. May we never forget the mercy which God showers upon us unremittingly at every moment, day after day and month after month. Oh, how great is His mercy! How happily did we sleep in His lap, last night! How unmistakably did God's parental love manifest itself towards us! Lest our sleep be disturbed, He bade the voice of birds be hushed in

silence, and the dazzling sun-light be quenched in darkness. Oh, how can I find words to speak of the love with which we are nursed month after month and year after year, when we cannot define the limits of the mercy that He vouchsafes unto us in the space of a single moment. What is there that He leaves undone for our sakes? What hope is there that we may not expect to have fulfilled through His goodness?

E PRAYERS FROM THE BOOK OF VYĀKHYĀN

I

O Lord most high, we have come to Thee not in the pride of strength, but with a humble and lowly heart, that Thou mayst uplift and elevate us. We approach Thee not as saints but as sinners, that Thou mayst deliver us from evil, and save us from ignorance and frailty. We come to Thee, not bedecked with prosperity, but as poor afflicted souls, that our days of misery may be brought to an end. We come to Thee as creatures tainted with impurity, that Thou mayst wash away our iniquities, and fill our hearts with a holy and righteous spirit. Gropping our way in the dark we seek after Thee, that Thou mayst lead us to Thy ineffable light. Entangled in the snares of death we call unto Thee, that Thou mayst conduct us to Thy mansion of immortality. All that pertains to us is utter misery, Thou art our only good and only bliss. Depending on Thee we eagerly await the Kingdom of Truth, the Light and Life everlasting. Our faith in Thy goodness is firm and unwavering. Lead me, O Lord, from out the false un to the true. Lead me from darkness unto light, from death unto Immortality. O Thou that art self-effulgent, do Thou reveal Thyself unto me. O Thou dread Lord may Thy benign face protect me for ever and ever—Santih—Santih

II.

O Lord God of Truth, since Thou inspirest me with the hope that Thou wilt abide with me for ever and ever, surely Thou wilt fulfil it. Thou hast never failed them that put their trust in Thee. How long, oh how long shall I wait for the day when I shall enjoy

the supreme happiness of seeing Thee face to face, and shall be privileged to live with Thee for evermore. O Lord my God, I have wholly surrendered myself to Thee, do Thou take me to Thyself It is not for earthly gain or rank or fame that I have come to Thee I have not sought Thy throne that Thou mayst show me the way to win the applause and esteem of my fellow-men ; I have sought Thy protection that Thou mayst renovate my soul with Thy strength, and purge it of the taint of sin O Saviour of the fallen ¹ to live for ever in Thy blessed company is my only wish Fulfil, O Lord, this my heart's desire Grant that I may have the power strictly to adhere to Thy straight path, by overcoming all the dangers and difficulties and temptations of this world, that I may repose in Thy perfect love, and do Thy will with all my heart This is my only prayer, O Lord ¹ Santih, Santih

III

O Lord my God, may we always conserve Thy beauty in our heart. Thou art the Light that lighteth the sun, the moon, and the starry heavens The whole universe is radiant with Thy Light Thou art the light of our eyes, and Thou art the light of our soul Thou art the light of light—supremely beautiful If it be Thy will, O Lord, that we should be saved from the sin and suffering of this world, then take us instantly by the hand, and conduct us to Thy holy Presence. The storm and stress of this life are past all endurance. Abide with us as our Protector. If I am banished from Thy presence, the sun, moon, and stars lose their lustre in my eyes O Lord of my heart, make me Thy constant companion and servitor

“ I ask Thee not for wealth or fame Grant me only this privilege that I may remain Thy servant and attendant for ever and ever.”

IV.

Beloved brethren, let us all come before God with a guileless heart, and casting away our troublesome cares and distractions, let us pray to Him, saying —

O Life of our life, O Light of the world, show us Thy benign countenance. Draw our hearts unto Thee, and never again shall we

depart from Thee, never again shall we isolate Thee from our hearts. Henceforth we abjure all low desires and unclean thoughts, and make ourselves wholly and absolutely Thine Thy will shall be our guide, Thy goodness shall we ever hold up before us as our pattern and our highest ideal, we shall no longer suffer ourselves to be led astray by the allurements of the world. Daily shall we grow and advance towards, Thee, and live under Thy very eyes, and unto Thy keeping shall we entrust our lives. Do Thou accept our all —Santh, Santh.

V

O Supreme Spirit, Thou hast sent us to this world to live under Thy protection, and to love Thee and do Thy work Trained in this life, we shall mount up to higher spheres of existence, and ever advance towards Thee May we never, through our fault, be deprived of the deathless, priceless bliss that Thou hast reserved for us May we bring our soul and lay it at Thy feet after we have ennobled and purified it, and replace in Thy hands the precious gifts that Thou hast conferred upon us Unless Thou helpst us, we can do nothing We therefore pray for Thy everlasting aid do Thou lead us along Thy blessed path of Righteousness,—Santh, Santh

VI

O Lord most high, Thou art our stay and comfort Thou art our Treasure, our only Friend. Thou art our Father and Thou art our Mother Do Thou exalt our love to Thee, and so ordain that all the inclinations and affections of our mind may follow the spirit of goodness that is of Thee All our strength we have derived from Thee, may we devote it to Thy service In whatever direction our work lies, may we there behold Thy eyes fixed upon us O Supreme Spirit, lead us to Thy path of truth and purity and reveal Thyself to our eyes of faith. We have no other prayer to offer.

VII.

O Spirit Supreme, Soul uncreate, Thou dwellest in our soul and rulest it as Thou rulest the universe. To every creature living under

Thy protection, Thou hast assigned its proper vocation. He who loveth to do thy work doeth work that is holy. He who hath seen the glory of Thy countenance—the beneficence of Thy handiwork, never dreams of severing himself from Thee. The littleness of his own self, so addicted to evil-doing, becomes repulsive to him, and the lofty sublimity of Thy Being reveals its beauty to his eyes, and draws him towards Thee. Looking inward at my soul, so prone to evil, my heart is filled with penitence, but when I contemplate Thy holiness, my heart is sanctified. My soul is mortified when it thinks of its ever-recurring sorrows and miseries; but my heart rejoiceth when it beholds the light of Thy countenance. O Lord my God, Thou art our all. When we discern Thy hand, and understand Thy truth, and strive to attain Thy goodness, even in the minutest degree, we feel exceeding joy. Everlasting is the union of the soul with Thee. Dwelling within our hearts, Thou speakest in Thy still small voice, and ceaselessly dost impart to us such counsel as may conduce to our present good and future happiness. What need have we to obey any other voice, when it is Thou that speakest in accents sweet and pure? Why should we not listen, rapt in silence, to those words of truth and goodness, when it is Thou who utterest them and instillest them into our understanding? Should we not keep our ears turned towards that direction from which Thy voice proceeds? At every step of our life dost Thou deliver unto us Thy commandments, and whenever we stumble, Thou dost strengthen our souls with the strength of righteousness: hence are we enabled to stand erect: else, like a staff unsupported, we must have been levelled to the dust. Whatever be the commandments Thou givest, they should be laid to heart by us, and whatever be the work Thou commandest, that it is our bounden duty to perform. Forsake us not, O God my Lord, in this terrible world: abandon us not. We seek Thy shelter: we place ourselves under Thy protection: take us, O take us into Thy arms, as the mother takes up her children. Danger and difficulties beset us; the noise and confusion of the world tend to estrange us from Thee. Do Thou, who art all-merciful, protect us, and so ordain that nothing can separate us from Thee. Grant, O Lord, that we may devote ourselves to Thy work as long as life remains, in the full assurance

that Thou art ever with us as our Father and our Mother.—Santih Santih.

VIII.

O Lord our God, draw us unto Thee. What need have we to pray to Thee for worldly possessions? All the day long, all the night through, it is Thy mercy that nourishes our body and mind. It is from Thy hand that prosperity and adversity, joy and sorrow, reward and punishment, come to us, and contribute to our well-being and advancement. From the moment we were born, Thou hast showered Thy mercy upon us without stint. For what shall we then pray to Thee? Let Thy will be done, for that alone is good which Thou dost will. Let Thy will be done, that peace and good-will may reign over the world for ever and ever. We know not what conduces to our welfare and what to our misery; this only we know, that to obtain Thee is the highest good attainable by man. If the renunciation of all wealth and possessions, all honour and rank, and even life itself, be the way to obtain Thee, such renunciation must be the greatest good for us, but if forsaking Thee be the way to the highest throne in the world, no evil can be greater than such a consummation. When Thou appearest in our heart, we obtain all the good in the world. Therefore we pray to Thee for only one boon—the boon of the light of Thy countenance. We call unto Thee, saying, O reveal Thyself to us, remain in our heart abide in it as its Lord, and take us unto Thyself. Our eyes are fixed neither on earth nor on heaven, but on Thee alone. Thee only do we behold, and Thee only do we covet. Our heart yearns for Thy company, and for Thy words of comfort and consolation, come and dwell within this broken heart, and enter this poor cottage of our bodily frame. We have no hope that our powers will avail us much; we have no strength of our own, and cannot do much for Thy sake. Thy mercy is our all. Thou art our all. Enclose us within Thy embrace, grant us protection under the shadow of Thy feet, bring us within the sphere of Thy love, and deliver us from all misery and affliction.

Whenever, O God, I have prayed to Thee, Thou hast heard my prayer. On the lofty mountain-top have I beheld Thee, and when

in the depths of the desolate forest I have sought Thee longing, even there Thou hast shed on my heart the cooling waters of Thy peace.

Lead us, O Lord, from the false to the true, lead us from darkness unto light, from death unto immortality. Thou who art the source of all light, reveal Thyself unto us O Thou dread Lord, may Thy benign countenance protect us for ever and ever.

Santih Santih

IX.

O Lord my God, how can I describe Thy glory? I do not know where to begin and where to end Thou dwellest in that light unto which no man can approach But the nearer I come to the end of my days on this earth, closer and closer do I feel Thee in my soul. My hair, once dark, has now grown white : the lustre of my eyes has become dim my body is daily growing more and more feeble, but Thy mercy knows no decline At this very moment Thy mercy makes its way into my inner being, and invigorates my soul with fresh strength and life O thou Lord of mercy, lead me to Thy abode of bliss I now yearn for nothing but Thee Here I am keenly agitated by praise and blame, by the sorrows of life, and the pangs of separation from those near and dear to me Thou alone art my refuge Thou who bearest the burden of the whole universe, wilt Thou not bear the burden of this little heart of mine? Thou, O Lord, art my hope and stay When Thou art near, misery cannot approach nor danger assail me, but when Thou art far away, even the point of a blade of *kusa* grass becomes as grievous as the heavy iron goad is to the elephant. O Lord my God, I come to Thee sorely afflicted by the tumult of the world, and seek Thy shelter, do Thou make me worthy of Thine abode of bliss.

Santih Santih

X

O Lord our Saviour, save us from the torture and agony of sinfulness and moral obliquity May we all fully obey Thy law of righteousness, and be ever guiltless before Thee. We have known Thy love for us. As in lands blessed with righteousness and know-

ledge is Thy mercy manifest, so in countries dark and degraded is Thy mercy also apparent. A bit of wood that catches fire, is soon reduced to ashes and then cooled likewise the sinner's heart, burnt by the fire of agony, becomes the very dust of Thy path when the waters of Thy mercy are poured upon it. Thy love, Thy mercy are without bounds. We have nothing to fear if we put our trust in Thy goodness. To seek Thy refuge is the only remedy for all pain and anguish. O Lord Supreme, be Thou our help

Santih Santih.

XI.

O Supreme Spirit, sorely troubled by the sorrows, the passions, and the turmoil of the world, I look up to Thy lofty abode on high. Thou art kind to those that are humbled by affliction, and merciful to the poor in spirit. Vouchsafe Thy mercy unto me. Thy blessings descend even on those that see Thee not, nor want to know Thee. The veriest debauchee, who devotes himself entirely to the pursuit of pleasure and money-making, in utter forgetfulness of the world to come,—even he is at times awakened to a sense of his higher destiny in the presence of death,—death which Thou sendest as Thy messenger to bring him to his right senses. He regains momentary consciousness like a man in delirium, and is then able perchance to catch a glimpse of Thee in the midst of the encircling darkness. There is none in all this world who has not need of Thee, who seeks not for Thy blessings. Savage people steeped in ignorance and superstition, as also civilized nations enjoying the light of knowledge, all—all have need of Thy help and protection. Who is there that does not bow down before Thee? Thou art the Lord of creation and Monarch of all sentient beings—सर्वेषां सत्त्वानामधिपति सर्वेषां सत्त्वानां राजा। Thou art the Ruler of all, Thou keepest all under the domination of Thy law; Thou maintainest all Thy creatures as their Monarch, their Governor, their Father and Mother, their Friend and Comrade. All pray to Thee with folded hands. Some pray for material gifts; others, burning with Divine fervour, pray to Thee for Thine own Self, as the crowning gift above everything else. Some pray to Thee for the enjoyment of paradise, others for

the boon of salvation. Men are inspired to pray to Thee now by fear, now by hope. In some way or other all are impelled to come before Thy throne. O Lord my God, how manifold are the forms in which Thy mercy is manifested how wonderful is Thy lovingkindness! My tongue refuses to give utterance to all that I feel. That mercy which I feel in my own insignificant life, the self-same mercy extends over the countless beings of Thy illimitable kingdom, and ministers to their diverse wants and aspirations. Thy mercy shows itself in the day and in the night, in the heart of the mother, and the inmost life of the saint O Lord, I call upon Thee with all my mind and all my heart do Thou grant me all that may help me to worship Thee. Employ my hands in Thy work, speed my feet on Thy errands, engage my tongue in singing Thy glory, immerse my mind in Thy contemplation, and unite my soul with Thee, let my soul find rest by resting in Thee, may it be filled with the light of Divine Wisdom. How wonderful it is that Thou, Merciful Lord, shouldst instantly grant my prayer. I behold Thee at this very moment in my soul. I see that Thou art without form or shape, that Thou art holy, true, and beautiful. It is by Thy ordinance that the Sun and the Moon exist, held up in space By Thy ordinance the day and the night, the fortnight and the month, the seasons of the year, come and go. By Thy ordinance the rivers flow down from snowy mountains, and speed on their courses towards the East and the West Should a man spend his whole life in the performance of penances, and sacrificial and expiatory rites and ceremonies prescribed in the Shastras, yet know not Thee, fruitless will be his works He who departs from the scene of this life without knowing Thee, is a pitiable creature, the lowest of the low, but he who quits this world after knowing Thee, is the true Brâhman. Blessed art Thou, O Lord of the Universe, blessed art Thou!

XII.

O Lord our God, Thou art so near us, yet why do we deem Thee to be far away? We take no pains to approach unto Thee, and therefore think in our foolishness that Thou regardest us not Blind

to our own supine indifference, we thoughtlessly cast reproach on Thy gracious Providence Thou showest Thyself to us without fail whenever we long for Thee we seek Thee not and therefore cannot find Thee O God most high, may we seek Thee with all our heart, all our soul and all our strength May we offer to Thee all our love Be Thou, O Lord, graciously pleased to ordain that we may consecrate all our lives to Thy service

XIII

O Lord my God, illumine this our benighted Motherland Cast Thy look of grace on these Thy children, who are so weak and helpless Who else but Thou canst help this downtrodden land, which is begirt by endless troubles and calamities, and from which lamentations rise up to heaven day and night Do Thou save our country from the depth of degradation into which it hath sunk Send righteousness unto it, O Lord, for in righteousness is our salvation On every soul do Thou pour down Thy waters of mercy and reveal Thyself as our Father and our Mother that we may worship Thee with our whole heart Oh ! when will that day dawn upon this land, when all her sons will unite in indissoluble brotherhood, and worship Thee with one accord Our little efforts can accomplish nothing, O Thou that crownest all work with success, grant us Thy grace

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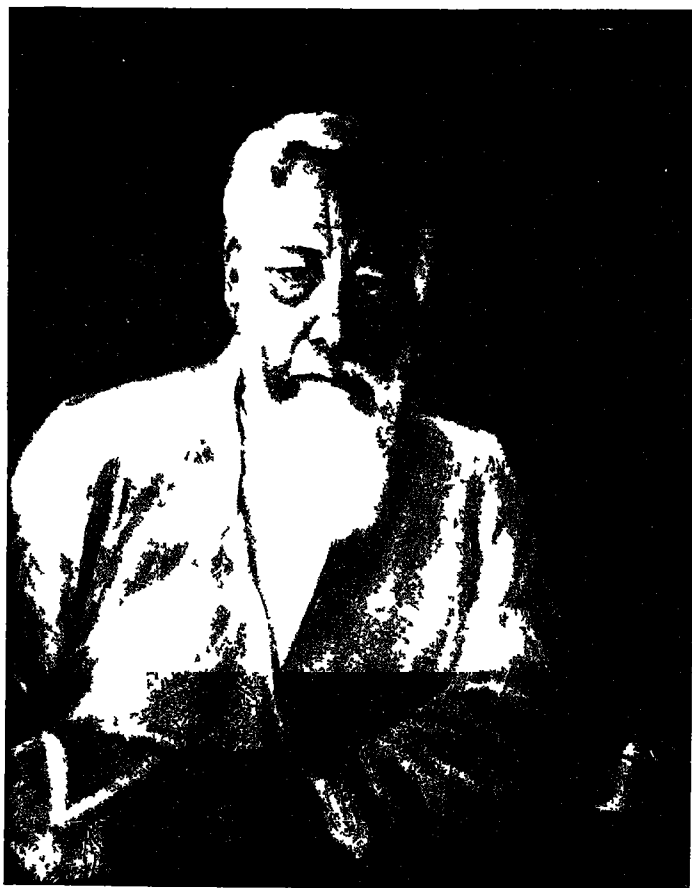
EXTRACT FROM THE FAREWELL OFFERING

OR

MAHARSHI DEVENDRANATH TAGORE

THIS offering of last words is, as it were, a voice from the blessed dead He whose offering it is, in imminent expectation of a summons to his Maker's presence, meant it to be his final blessing to those so beloved of him on earth

(Preface by Mohini Mohan Chatterjee, Dated 1st January, 1889)



Mahaishi—(age 85)

